

IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 8, NO. 17 MARCH 28-APRIL 3, 1984 \$1.25

The French Reagan
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First Light of a New Day

25 years ago
Lorraine
Hansberry's
"A Raisin in the
Sun" launched
a new black
theater
movement.

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George McGovern: on to the next stage

By Paul Buhle

BOSTON

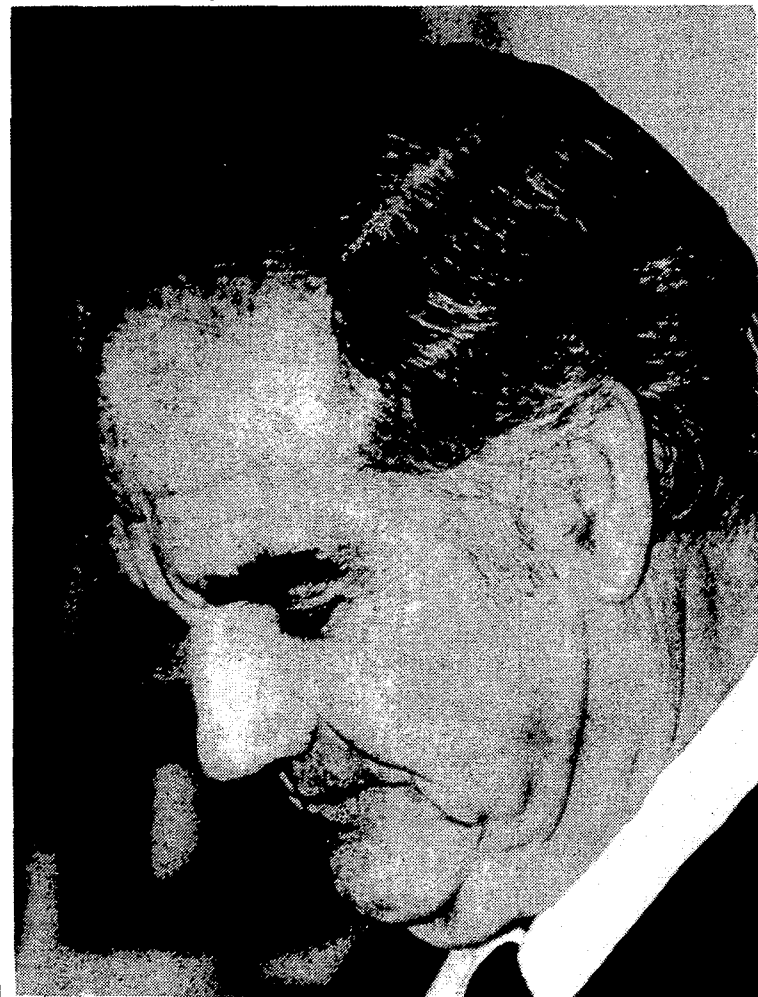
"He singlehandedly took on the national press and won." That's how George McGovern's national press secretary, Mark Kaminsky, consoled me as the candidate recently prepared the official announcement wrapping up his presidential effort. Despite the pleas of campaign workers, who as late as mid-evening on "Super Tuesday" had booked their flights to Illinois, McGovern could not be persuaded to stay in the race by a remarkable 133,000 vote, which captured him third place in the Massachusetts primary. The road ahead looked unpromising. Besides, he had made his political point. And now, almost basking in the role he had carved out as victor-in-defeat, he paused to recast his plans.

The paradoxical relations between McGovern and the press symbolize one of the oddest comebacks of American political history. McGovern began his candidacy the object of almost unprecedented ridicule. At first labeled "McStassen"—as if he had been a hapless perennial candidate (he has not entered a presidential race since 1972) and had not led congressional opposition to the war in Vietnam and garnered nearly 30 million votes against Nixon—McGovern suddenly became the "nostalgia candidate" when he gained visibility. "We had it coming and going with the 'Big Chill' factor," Kaminsky reflected sourly. When McGovern drew big and enthusiastic audiences, his success was attributed to generational soft-headedness; when he was less successful, he was seen as being deserted by ex-peaceniks turned more conservative.

During the Iowa caucuses, McGovern emerged as the sentimental favorite of reporters—not a serious contender but a moral arbiter between candidates. He was a "senior statesman" with what a *New York Times* editorial called the "glow of decency and...the best line of the campaign: don't throw away your conscience." That last word stuck. The "Conscience of the Democratic Party," some called him, and others the "Conscience of America." Here was a niche in American politics that had been empty since the late Norman Thomas. "Saint George" acquired a curiously familiar aura of peacemaker, godwrestler and down-home Protestant, aflame with righteous indignation over injustice and impending catastrophe. But McGovern the political insider and Democratic Party loyalist would not likely choose moral influence without the position or constituency to make his message count. The Massachusetts vote marked the close of the first phase of McGovern himself deciding where his comeback would lead.

Clues to the answer may be found somewhere in McGovern's own background and political development. A minister's son in Depression South Dakota, McGovern, after graduating from Dakota Wesleyan College (where he won the state Peace Oratory contest in 1942) joined the Air Force and then attended American history graduate school at Northwestern University. His prairie idealism had been tempered by personal experience with international conflict as bomber pilot against the Germans and by political realism after the savage red-baiting defeat of Henry Wallace, whom he'd supported during most of the 1948 presidential campaign.

Sidney Blumenthal, in the March 5 *New Republic*, perceptively calls the young historian McGovern "the last progressive." But this is not quite correct. Progressive historians such as Charles Beard fixated



George McGovern's Massachusetts campaign had the air of a major peace crusade.

upon the American republican past, never coming to grips with the reality of class conflict and tending toward isolationism. McGovern's dissertation, published in 1972 as *The Great Coalfield War*, is a careful study of state repression, its economic cost and moral implications.

Like his international idealism, this viewpoint is closer to the socialist "revisionism" of William A. Williams and the scholars around the journal *Studies on the Left*. But there's an important difference: unlike the "revisionists," McGovern saw the welfare-warfare state not as a logical outgrowth of the New Deal but as an aberrational break with the best of Franklin Roosevelt's heritage.

McGovern's directorship of the Food for Peace program under John F. Kennedy illustrates his orientation. The young veteran of progressive Midwestern politics sought a means to cut through ideology and bureaucracy with a practical plan. American farmers would produce, starving people would be fed and the nation could be transformed from policemen of the non-Communist world to friend and guide of unfortunate nations. It all sounds like an epilogue to the New-Deal ending of the movie version of *Grapes of Wrath*. But it had a major political virtue in the Kennedy world view. Mainline Democratic pols and intellectuals cheered McGovern's portrayal of the agency as a peaceful "weapon against Communism." McGovern tried hard to stay in the party center. Rising alone in the Senate to attack Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policy, he increasingly shunned and finally attacked demonstrations as a deflection of the political process. By 1972, he had brilliantly maneuvered to draw the most mainstream sections of the New Left, women's and minority movements into the Democratic Party. Cold War Democrats, unshaken in their resolve, provided aid and comfort to what political scientist Samuel Lubell called "the first total campaign" in American history. Trapped by Nixon into somehow representing symbols (student violence, drugs, welfare cheats)

THE STORY INSIDERS

that McGovern did not remotely embrace, the better man lost.

McGovern seems never to have figured out quite what hit him from his blind, Democratic side, or keeps hitting him when he speaks out for a compassionate foreign policy. He staged a public-relations coup in a recent summit conference with his old nemesis, Richard Nixon, uniting on the necessity of detente. And history may credit McGovern with a second ex-officio foreign policy triumph, forcing the issue of American troop withdrawal from Lebanon.

But when McGovern speaks about a world where the U.S. and the Soviet Union have beaten their swords into plowshares, he conjures up visions not only unimaginable but also detestable to the current power-wielders in the Democratic Party. Even so, liberal Cold Warriors like those of the *New York Times* or *New Republic* eased off McGovern because his visions help redress Reagan's confrontationist rhetoric without posing a serious threat to the positions of the front-runners.

Of course, McGovern didn't see it that way. But the ambiguity of the idealist outsider-on-the-inside constrained McGovern's own supporters. He entered relatively late, optimistic that other candidates would speak to the Cold War crisis. But only Alan Cranston did (with the effect of forcing the freeze issue before McGovern came on strong).

Iowa restored McGovern to the public eye. But short of a second-place finish there, he could not have resolved the fundamental problem of his organization. Most Democratic regulars would have nothing to do with the McGovernites. Many veteran peace activists, a natural constituency, held back for fear of damaging an anti-Reagan front. Many of those who had followed Cranston from the freeze leaped aboard the Hart bandwagon, suddenly hitched to campus enthusiasm and defections from the Mondale machine. Radicals active this year turned toward Jesse Jackson because he seemed to present a quasi third-party (as well as a multi-racial) politics. Deprived of almost everything but McGovern's personal sincerity and hard-hitting speeches, McGovernites put all their resources into one supreme effort: Massachusetts.

The last-minute wave of campaign volunteers, lacking the resources or energies to penetrate the western parts of the state, worked wonders on the Greater Boston liberal constituencies. They leafleted and phoned potential supporters, urging them to "vote their consciences." The volunteers possessed a burning devotion to McGovern and showed virtually no political reservations—an attitude noticeably absent from Hart and Mondale campaigners. (Indeed, many supporters of the two leaders privately confessed that they considered McGovern the best choice, if politically unelectable.) Against a background of spectacular television ads calling for a 25 percent cut in defense spending and immediate peace with Central America, the effort took on the air of a major peace crusade.

When Arlo Guthrie sat down at the piano in Boston's Parker House ballroom where we all waited election day results, I thought of a tune sung at Lenny Bruce's funeral. It was a quixotic tribute to the power of individual personality, an ending and a beginning. Guthrie amiably jabbed at the intellectuals for their "diplomatic immunity" from singing alone, and disclaimed his own role in mainstream politics by saying, "I'm not the usual sort of person to be sitting here." Yet nobody in the room seemed the usual sort.

What McGovern's candidacy represented is difficult to pin down. Yet in the future he could become an influential cabinet officer

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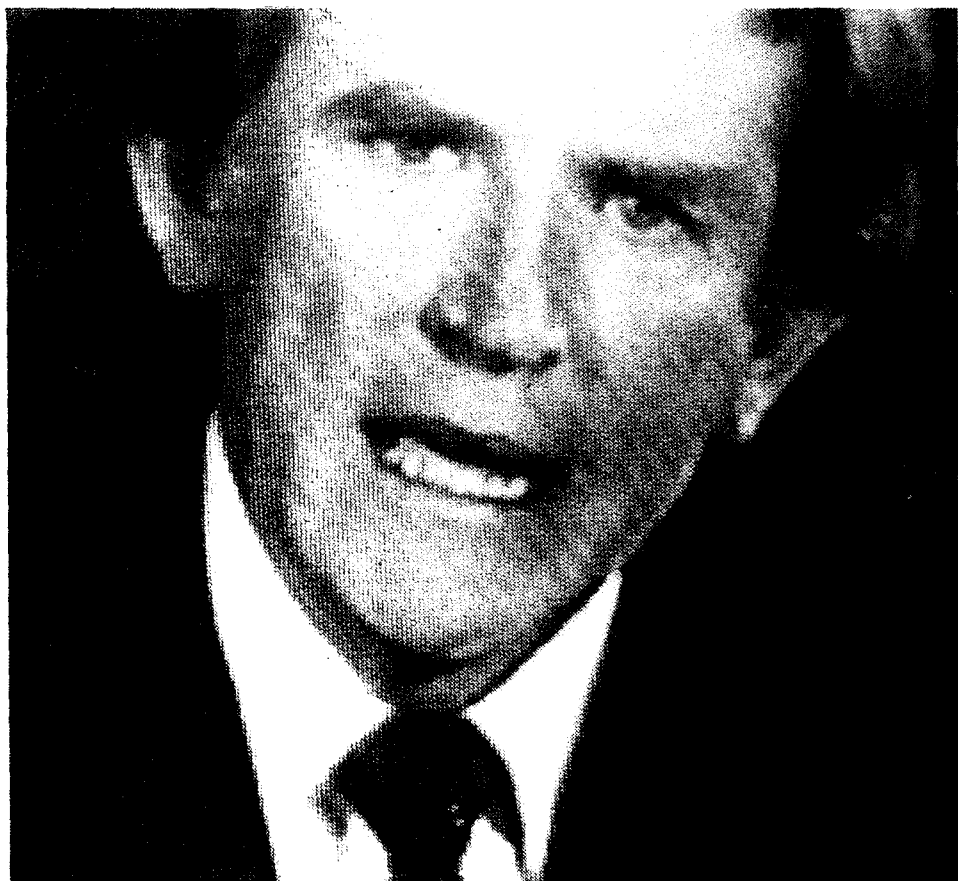
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IN THESE TIMES

Hart, Mondale attack each other from left and right



By David Moberg

IN AN ILLINOIS PRELUDE TO WHAT may become a major primary conflict, both Sen. Gary Hart and Walter Mondale tried more than ever before to draw distinctions between how each of them would handle this country's foreign affairs.

Hart tied Mondale to the Vietnam war, which Mondale belatedly opposed, and portrayed himself as a post-Vietnam realist who would be less likely to send U.S. troops into battle overseas. Although Mondale tried to outflank Hart from the left on arms control, he invoked Cold-War themes as he pictured Hart as naive

—unwilling to defend far-flung American "interests" and insufficiently tough against Communists. He also attacked Hart for inconsistency and inexperience, casting doubt on his ability to handle major crises.

Both Hart and Mondale, however, still hold positions of the moderate-to-liberal wing of the party and are dramatically at odds with Reagan. Jesse Jackson remained the candidate with the most significant departures from Democratic orthodoxies on foreign policy. That is most striking with regard to the Mideast, where Jackson stresses meeting both Palestinian and Israeli needs. Hart and Mondale have virtually indistinguishable Mideast policies, although Mondale is attempting to show

a more complete support for Israel (arguing that Hart vacillated before supporting the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, for example).

Mondale argued, in the first of talks he and Hart gave to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, that after World War II we "gave up the idea that America could live in isolation." While attacking Reagan for a policy of "global unilateralism," Mondale also criticized Hart for introducing "a strange new vision of our role in the world that threatens to weaken our crucial alliances, and either ignores or underestimates what I think history teaches us."

In particular he attacked Hart's proposals to scale down U.S. troop commitments in Europe while building up a bigger navy of smaller ships. Only by strengthening European conventional land forces, he said, is there a chance to abandon current U.S. policy that refuses to repudiate first use of nuclear weapons.

He chided Hart for saying that he would not use American military force to keep the Persian Gulf oil shipping lanes free (although Hart has subsequently indicated he might be willing to use planes, ships and maybe even troops, according to a *Newsweek* interview). Without saying what he would do, Mondale argued for "effective and meaningful strategic cooperation with Israel," without giving any indication of pressuring Israel for any peace moves.

On Central America, Mondale made some of his harshest comments. "Just because Mr. Reagan turns a blind eye to the excesses of the right, it does not follow that Democrats should ignore the excesses of the extreme left," he said. "And here again I differ from Mr. Hart."

Hart's argument that "in the Third World, the real enemy is hunger, poverty and disease, not Communism" is "only part of the truth," Mondale said. Referring to a *Washington Post* interview,

Mondale quoted Hart as saying he didn't know if Cuba was "totalitarian." "Well, I do. It's a Communist dictatorship and a faithful executor of Soviet aggression around the world. We need a president who knows that." (Hart insisted the comment came in the context of an academic quibble and agrees Cuba is totalitarian.)

Mondale also rejected Hart's call for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Honduras, saying he wanted to keep some there to bargain for concessions from Nicaragua. "Guilt is not a foreign policy, and the world is not a debating society," Mondale said, sounding conservative themes. "It is a tough, dangerous place. And anyone who views it otherwise will only make it more dangerous."

Coming at Hart from the left, Mondale criticized his opponent for being late to endorse the nuclear freeze and supporting a version of the build-down proposal that Reagan eventually turned to his own uses.

Mondale campaign aides denied that there was any new shift to the right, but his remarks raised concerns about his Cold-War liberal past. Last November, for example, he spoke to the hawkish Coalition for a Democratic Majority, assuring them he shared much of their outlook since his own formative political experience was fighting "the united front" in post-war Minnesota politics.

Neither Hart nor Mondale wants to see the contest framed in left-right terms. Mondale National Political Director Paul Tully said that an ad showing a red telephone and asking if the hand that reaches for that hot-line phone is untested is designed to make voters stop for a moment and think about Hart. Their polling showed voters' biggest doubts about Hart focused on his ability to handle a crisis. Although they will cast the choice as simple answers versus real world, Tully says, "People still think Mondale is well to the left of Hart. We like that. We think it's right."

But Hart, with his direct reminders of Vietnam and calls for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Central America, has escalated his appeal to the left. In his address to the Council on Foreign Relations, Hart called for "re-

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Divided voters

CHICAGO—Walter Mondale needed his victory in Illinois badly, and he got it partly through his own strengths, partly through the weaknesses of Gary Hart. But what the results indicated most was the deep gulf separating different constituencies of the Democratic Party and the difficulty of putting them together in the fall to beat Ronald Reagan.

Hart apparently lost ground as voting drew near; maybe the Mondale campaign of attacking his record on a variety of points and questioning his seasoning for the job stemmed the enthusiasm. But Hart's disorganized campaign committed several gaffes—running, then pulling, or maybe not pulling, an ad linking Mondale and Chicago machine chairman Ed Vrdolyak; suggesting Mondale was running ads personally attacking him, then admitting it wasn't true. Worst for Hart, he stumbled in keeping the terms of the election on his ground—past versus future—and wound up tripping on the tangled web of local politics.

But Hart's approach to the economy may not address the worries of the big industrial states like Illinois where unemployment is still high. He never made it clear what he could do for unemployed workers here. When asked, he would respond with a small business, entrepreneurial pitch. He wants the grandson of Rosa Parks to be able to own a bus company in Birmingham. But how many people—black or white—own or are ever likely to own a small business?

Although his emphasis on foreign policy issues may have helped consolidate his base with educated, affluent Democrats and independents, unemployment, care for the poor, nuclear weapons and the deficit all worried voters much more, according to CBS/*New York Times* exit polls.

Mondale did far better with conservatives than Hart, and Hart much better with self-identified liberals. But Mondale's conservative appeal is to the older, Catholic, ethnic working-class Democratic voter, who is strongly anti-Communist, and Hart attracts the unaffiliated, white-collar, younger voter who may have voted for Reagan and thinks unions are too powerful. (In the end, Mondale got 41 percent of the preference vote to 35 percent for Hart and 21 percent for Jackson.)

Overwhelmingly, blacks voted for Jesse Jackson (74 percent, according to NBC, 79 percent, according to CBS), but only about 4 percent of whites joined the Rainbow Coalition (10 percent of Jews, according to NBC, despite the "Hymie" incident). The outpouring of black voters swelled Chicago election turnout to a new high for a presidential primary.

Although Mondale probably would have received a large number of those votes if Jackson had been out of the race, many people would never have voted. Mondale argued that his commitment to civil rights was deeper than that of Hart, but when Jackson challenged

both of them to commit the Democratic Party to end second primaries in the South—which often prevent black, liberal members of Congress from being elected—Mondale avoided the question entirely and Hart quickly agreed. Mondale has also been under fire from Jackson on foreign policy issues as well, suggesting the possibility of a Hart-Jackson convergence.

The huge black turnout helped Mayor Harold Washington elect delegate slates and consolidate his power in the black community by electing strongly pro-Washington members to the party's central committee. But the black and white reform efforts failed in all but two—arguably three—wards to oust machine committeemen and elect independents. That means—barring a not very probable alliance of supporters of Washington and State's Attorney Richard Daley, along with some township committee members—that Vrdolyak is likely to continue his rule over the Democratic Party. Other strategies are being mulled: attempting to elect a pro-Washington chairman of the city party or persuading Daley to cooperate under the threat of running a black in the state's attorney's race this fall.

The machine may have won its most important races—committeemen—but it could take little credit for Mondale's victory since it did so little for him. Unions, who cranked out letters and phone calls, could get some satisfaction from their efforts. Union members stuck with Mondale better in Illinois than in many other states.

In all previous primaries, Hart has won a plurality of white votes, and according to NBC he did so again narrowly (CBS showed Mondale with a slight

white lead). Mondale led among strong Democrats, although Jackson's supporters are mainly in that category, but Hart did better among independents. Hart's downfall may have come from failing to win over as high a percentage of young voters as he has in his other primary victories.

But one statistic that should frighten all Democrats came from mock heats between Reagan and Hart or Mondale. According to CBS exit polls, 38 percent of Hart voters (and even 18 percent of Mondale voters) said they would choose Reagan over Mondale in the fall. Likewise, 36 percent of Mondale voters (and 19 percent of Hart voters) said they would choose Reagan over Hart. Only Jackson voters stayed overwhelmingly loyal to the Democrats.

The division is not easy to classify: it is partly class (Mondale more blue-collar); it is partly culture (Hart more educated, financially secure, less tied to old institutions of church, neighborhood, union and party); it is partly generational; and in small part, it is ideological.

For the primaries in Pennsylvania and New York, the Mondale victory may be a premonition. Connecticut may still bear enough resemblance to Massachusetts or Rhode Island to buoy Hart. But in November the Democrats cannot beat Reagan without the constituencies of all three candidates. Hart had claimed a greater chance of winning because of his appeal beyond the party core that Mondale does not have.

But after Illinois it is less clear that he can appeal to enough voters in the traditional Democratic heartland to stop Mondale. And it is less clear that anybody can put it all together.

—D.M.

INSHORT

Word-of-mouth advertising

Beer magnates say the darndest things. After informing the audience of minority business owners in Denver that African "blacks lack the intellectual capacity to succeed, and it's taking them down the tubes," William Coors admonished them to be grateful: "One of the best things the slave traders did for you is to drag your ancestors here in chains." Reported in the *Rocky Mountain News*, the slurs made a stir and the chairman of the Adolph Coors Co. was forced to clarify his statements. It seems he wasn't meaning to denigrate blacks' innate intelligence but only pointing out the superiority of the free enterprise system and the "tremendous new opportunities" it affords blacks.

Coors' remarks propelled black groups across the country to join with labor, gay and lesbian groups in a boycott of Coors (see *In These Times*, March 14). The Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP, the 200,000-member fifth district of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and smaller black groups in more than 10 cities have decided to boycott, citing the incident as another indication of the Coors family's stance on minorities. Meanwhile, the national NAACP and the handful of black elected officials in Denver are giving Coors one more week to supply information about the corporation's affirmative action record as well as alleged support of the John Birch Society and the Heritage Foundation before they make their boycott decision.

Coming out

Eschewing the last traces of secrecy, 50 church workers who harbor Central Americans along the underground railroad went public with a caravan across the U.S. last week. Their illegal "cargo" is a Mayan Indian family of seven who fled Guatemala when the father was targeted by death squads for his work with the Christian base communities. The sanctuary workers may also be "targeted"—Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) arrested two more-refugee workers in Arizona a few weeks after their crackdown in Texas (see *In These Times*, February 29)—but the religious activists chose to contest the government by showing the strength and tenacity of their network. No hasty travelers, their week-long trip from Illinois to Vermont was planned for maximum visibility and continued organizing in the church communities they pass through. Destination: Weston Priory in Weston, Vermont. Previously known for Benedictine monks singing trendy religious songs, the priory will become the 100th sanctuary on March 24—the fourth anniversary of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero's death.

A penny saved...

While Fritz bombards him with "where's the beef?" and reporters lie in wait for the next Kennedy impersonation, insiders are worried that Gary Hart isn't image conscious enough, if the March 12 editorial in *Advertising Age* is any indication. Bemoaning the fact that the Hart campaign has been working with a "bare-bones budget" that allows for only "minimal advertising" yet is still neck-and-neck with Mondale's big-bucks campaign, the editorial concludes that "spending less to accomplish more on the campaign trail could shake up the political process." But, take heart, advertisers—this revolution in media campaigning might be thwarted after all. If Hart continues his victorious campaign drive, the "success will bring more money to the campaign coffers, and more money inevitably leads to more of the usual trappings of a big-time political campaign—including advertising."

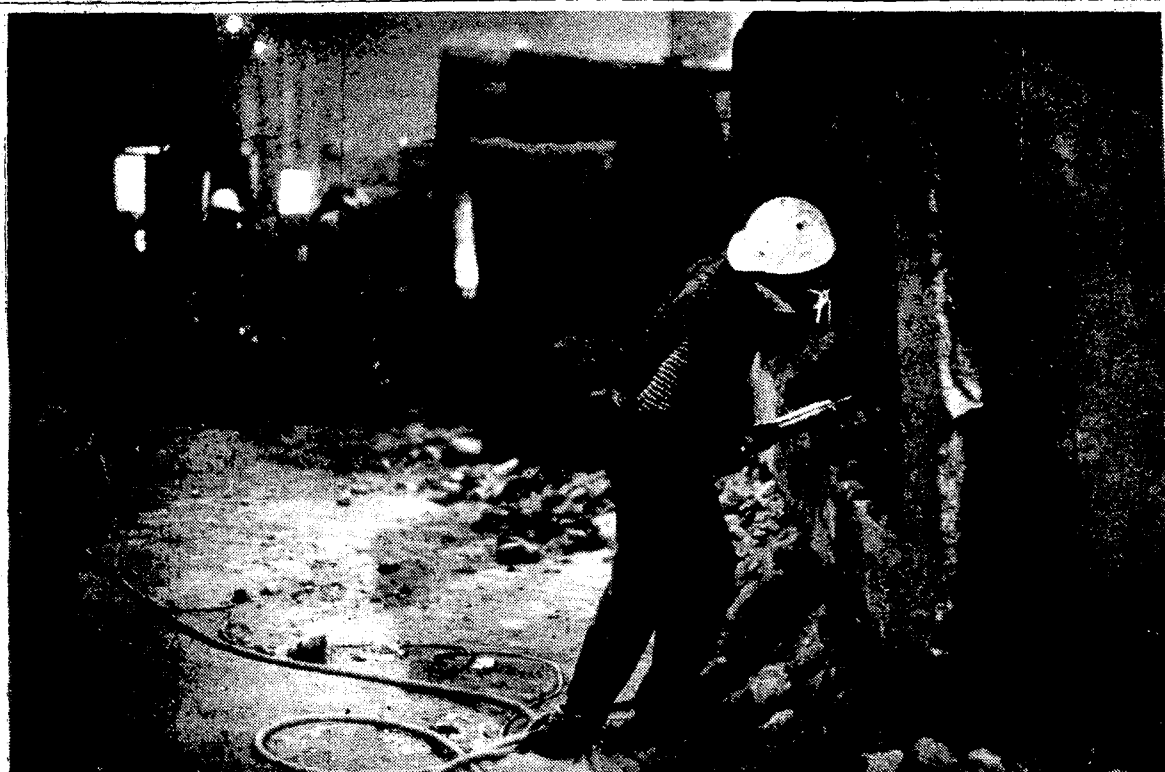
Caught red-handed

The Heritage Foundation—the "philosophy department of the Reagan administration" and a consummate friend of business—was given a black mark by the Better Business Bureau's (BBB) philanthropic advisory service, reports Steve Askin. The foundation sent fundraising letters promising a seat on the "Heritage executive committee" in return for a hefty donation. The BBB's investigation showed that the members of this "executive committee" had no input except a monetary one. The right-wing think tank also claimed to have "virtually exhausted our funds for 1982 exposing United Nations abuses and identifying wasteful government spending." The BBB found that the Heritage Foundation increased its assets by \$365,000 in '82, however, and decided that the word "virtually" was a misleading qualifier.

Toxic provocation

Brimfield, Mass., is known for its gently rolling hills and its tough-minded townspeople. Declaring its independence from the "island of Great Britain" two years before the rest of the U.S., the western Massachusetts town is now considering seceding from the state over an unwanted site for treating hazardous wastes. Recently, the state siting council provoked the residents by over-riding Brimfield's zoning ordinances and permitting a California company to build a \$50 million treatment plant in this small town of 2,400. Decrying the "loss of home rule" the residents will form a committee to study secession in their annual May 14 town meeting.

—Beth Maschinot



Steelworkers vie for post

CHICAGO—For the first time since 1965, top leadership of the Steelworkers union has split over who should run the union. Former Secretary Lynn Williams was picked by a divided executive board as temporary successor to Lloyd McBride, who died last November. But Frank McKee, the union's treasurer, challenged Williams in the March 27 election.

The candidates differ on few fundamental policy questions, and both have taken pains to distance themselves as much as possible from the unpopular concession contract that they both supported for the basic steel industry last year.

Williams argues that he is the candidate with new ideas and with long experience in the leadership of the union. McKee, he says, is "much more traditionalist, waiting for when things get back to normal." His new ideas include "union involvement in economic decision-making. I see myself as being more willing to exercise influence over pension funds or pursuing corporate campaigns." Williams talks of negotiating penalties for management violation of contracts.

Some supporters push Williams as a sophisticated, college-educated leader like Richard Trumka of the Mineworkers. In contrast, one union staff person working for Williams said contemptuously of McKee: "He's just an old mill-hand."

But McKee is playing up his 20 years of work in a steel mill in contrast to the short time—9 months, Williams supporters say—that Williams worked in a factory before becoming a career

union official. Because he spent so many years on the job and in local offices before becoming a staff representative and district director, McKee claims to be more in touch with the sentiments of the average worker.

"We have another, philosophical difference," McKee said. "I believe the union has to be rebuilt from where its strength is, the local rank and file, local leaders. Williams is more an international trade unionist. I'm more parochial. He thinks the union can be run from the top down. I think we have to decentralize some of the operations on the regional level." Unlike Williams, who favors ratification of contracts in steel and three other major industries by a conference of representatives, McKee has endorsed membership ratification.

The Trumka analogy doesn't hold very well, since militant miners tended to back Trumka. A large number of local militants in the Steelworkers has supported McKee, especially after Ron Weisen, the combative president of the Pittsburgh-area Homestead local, failed to receive enough nominations to be placed on the ballot. Many of them see McKee as a tougher bargainer, especially since he resisted concessions more vigorously in the copper negotiations that he directed than the union did in the steel talks—even to the point of enduring a strike against Phelps Dodge that has gone on since last summer.

"I'm known in the industry as a hard-liner, but a very practical, honest bargainer," McKee said. "You have to maintain an adversarial relationship. Lynn has a tendency to be more conciliatory." But since he has taken office, Williams has tried to show himself as more militant, such as recommending no further concessions on the basic steel agreement (although McKee argues

that under current policy locals can still be "whipsawed" and forced to make concessions in valuable local rules).

"We're not going to build America by cutting wages," Williams said. "The labor movement has to go the opposite direction." Although he still defends the decision to make a "contribution to the industry" in the last steel contract, he notes that "whatever hopes there may have been for jobs have not been realized." McKee argues that if workers make such an investment, "there should be some retrieval."

Both candidates favor import quotas (15 percent of U.S. consumption, Williams says, maybe even lower, McKee rejoins). Both are agnostic about steel mergers, mainly waiting to decide what effect they could have on jobs.

McKee, however, has made a major issue of Williams' Canadian citizenship, claiming that he does not know U.S. companies or politics and that Canadian exports of steel to the U.S. have cost 13,000 jobs. Also, he portrays Williams' possible election as a takeover of the union by the 20 percent of members who are Canadian. Williams' supporters denounce the tactic as divisive, irrelevant and contrary to good union principles.

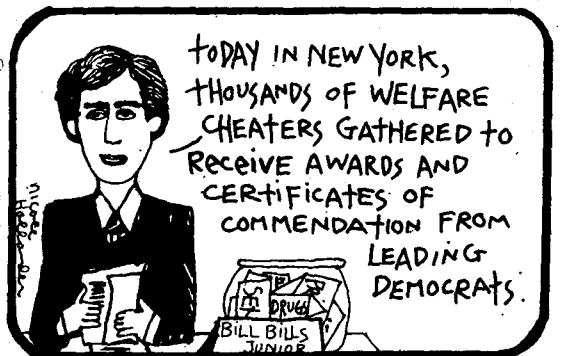
McKee says the other side started it. "Damn it, if they can run around Canada saying Canadians should vote for Canadians, then I don't see why I can't say to Americans that they should vote for the all-American steelworker, Frank McKee."

For the 725,000 steelworkers that remain at work out of a union that was twice that large four years ago, it would seem that there are deeper issues. It is also a sad outgrowth of the politics of protectionism, whatever the merits of "managed trade."

—David Moberg

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



By Deborah Bouton

WASHINGTON

FARMWORKERS HAVE WON THE latest—but probably not the last—round in an 11-year court battle with the government. On March 1 the Department of Labor finally issued draft regulations that would require agricultural employers to provide toilets, drinking water and hand-washing facilities in the fields.

Whether the rule will be enacted, however, remains to be seen. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published the proposed rule only after it was threatened with another in a series of contempt citations from U.S. District Court Judge June Green for failing to act "in good faith" in the matter.

The rule would apply only to farmers employing 11 or more workers who spend at least three hours a day in the fields. It would require one toilet and

Employers must provide toilets, drinking water and hand-washing facilities in the fields.

hand-washing facility for every 20 workers, as well as "readily accessible" drinking water located within a quarter mile of the work site. About 67,000 farm operations and 766,000 of the nation's five million farmworkers would be affected by the rule, which OSHA says would cost the agriculture industry about \$19 million a year, or 65 cents a worker per day.

Farmworker advocates maintain that the lack of such basic sanitation facilities contributes to the high incidence of parasitic diseases, urinary tract infections, heat strokes and pesticide poisoning among farmworkers, as well as crop contamination by human feces and pesticide residues.

When the act establishing OSHA was passed in 1970, it required basic sanitation facilities for all workers, including

farmworkers. But the following year, agriculture employers were exempted from the rule, prompting the National Congress of Hispanic American Citizens (also known as El Congreso) to file suit in 1973. In response, OSHA proposed a field sanitation standard in 1976 that drew immediate protest from agricultural interests. Final standards were never developed, according to OSHA, because of "other priorities."

The years that followed witnessed a roller-coaster of legal events as the courts issued several rulings in favor of El Congreso only to have them overturned on appeal by OSHA. Finally, in 1982, OSHA agreed in court to publish a proposed rule by January 1984 and to issue a final rule a year later. But when the January 16 deadline came, OSHA claimed that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) had "raised some issues" about the draft rule that would take more time to resolve.

At a news conference in early February, Charles Horwitz of the Migrant Legal Action Program (MLAP) noted that the executive order requiring draft regulations to be cleared through OMB prior to publication specifically exempts rules issued under court order, like the field sanitation standards. Even if the order did apply, he said, OSHA did not submit the rule to OMB until 11 days after the deadline had passed.

"What concerns us is that OSHA has used every legal technicality they could find over the past 12 years to frustrate the rights of farmworkers," he said.

Horwitz noted that agribusiness interests have always had a big influence on the Department of Labor, and "needless to say, farmworkers' influence with this administration in particular is not as big as that of the industry." He added that the agriculture establishment, represented primarily by the American Farm Bureau Federation, continues to oppose field sanitation standards on the basis of their cost, yet in 1982, the fruit and vegetable industry alone had \$13 billion in income. According to the Rev. Leon White, a

FARMWORKERS

A victory for field sanitation

former farmworker who is now a minister with the United Church of Christ in North Carolina, "It's not the money the farmers are concerned about. It's the dehumanizing effect that the lack of toilet facilities has. Farmers are afraid that if they begin to treat farmworkers like human beings, farmworkers will begin to demand more of their rights."

As Philip Van Buren of the Workers Defense League put it, "Even cruelty for animal laws require that you provide cattle with water."

With the regulations embargoed at OMB, OSHA again found itself before Judge Green. At a February 17 hearing,

Two weeks later, on March 1, OSHA published the draft proposal in the *Federal Register*. To MLAP and the others involved in the El Congreso suit, that in itself was a major victory.

But the OSHA proposal clearly does not push for the standard. "What they are really soliciting are suggestions that question its worth," Horwitz said.

Although it is generally accepted that basic sanitation is vital to health, OSHA noted that "it is nearly impossible to obtain scientific evidence about the risks farmworkers face without these facilities." It also questioned the need for a federal standard in the first place, given



The rule would apply only to farmers employing 11 or more workers.

Green chastised OSHA attorney Robert Seldon for the agency's "appalling" delays and said she agreed with Horwitz that OSHA had no right to send the rules to OMB for review. She asked why OSHA was "trying to turn back to square one" and threatened the agency with a contempt citation.

"Nothing has been required for drinking water for these people?" she asked. "Nothing has been required for hand-washing for these people? And nothing has even been done about providing Johnny-on-the-Spot type facilities? What has been done?" she demanded.

the existence of standards in 12 states and "employer voluntary action" in the others. According to Horwitz, however, most the farmworkers covered by the rule currently have no facilities available to them.

Meanwhile, the Farm Bureau is gearing up to fight the rules. "We are going to insist that they come up with some facts or expert testimony," said C.H. Fields, assistant national affairs director. And OSHA, which is accepting comments through April 16, says it may yet determine that no standard is needed.

Deborah Bouton is editor of Rural America, a non-profit advocacy organization.

NURSING HOMES

Another corporate campaign success

By Steve Askin

WASHINGTON

THE SERVICE EMPLOYEES International Union (SEIU) and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) have signed a peace treaty with the nation's largest nursing home chain, Beverly Enterprises. If obeyed, the agreement, announced March 1, can set the stage for new organizing and bargaining at the billion-dollar-a-year company. It may also provide a model for union organizing in the face of intense management resistance.

This was the second time in recent months that a multi-union coalition successfully used a "corporate campaign" to pressure a nationwide company to moderate its anti-union activities. In December, a dozen unions suspended their campaign against Litton Industries, after that \$4.7 billion conglomerate agreed to set up a joint committee to resolve union-management disputes.

Both campaigns grew out of union frustration with government failure to enforce laws protecting workers' right to

unionize. Agencies like the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) have become "useless in terms of trying to enforce any meaningful rights for employees, and specifically useless in dealing with corporate union-busting techniques," explained SEIU health care coordinator Jerry Shea.

The unions called off their multi-front war against Beverly that combined political pressure, shareholder action and embarrassing exposes of alleged mistreatment of nursing home patients. They plan to continue the organizing drive that produced 28 victories in 41 election contests involving the two unions since the beginning of 1983. Beverly agreed to foster a "non-coercive atmosphere" in organizing campaigns.

A blandly worded joint statement also announced creation of a "labor-management task force" and said that "the understanding defines guidelines for an ongoing relationship and provides a framework for cooperation on programs for employees and patients." The precise terms remain secret, but the agreement is expected to lead to speedy negotiations for first contracts at newly organized homes. No contracts have yet been signed

at the facilities organized in the last 15 months.

The agreement will allow workers to "organize without fear of a pattern of opposition and reaction, coercion and intimidation," said Shea, who called it "a giant step forward in bringing organization to the long-term care industry." He said it also "provides a basis for organizing more readily" at the nearly 800 Beverly nursing homes, more than 90 percent still non-union, that employ 60,000 people across the country.

The settlement followed a year of repeated triumphs for the unions. Their 68 percent win-rate compares favorably with the labor movement's national average of only 44 percent. They had set the stage for organizing with careful study of employee attitudes and painstaking research on the company's finances and patient-care record.

The unions' surveys had revealed that 74 percent of workers viewed patient care as only fair or poor, 68 percent thought patients' meals were sub-standard and 88 percent said that understaffing made it

The settlement followed a long year of repeated triumphs for SEIU and UFCW.

impossible to provide adequate care. The unions responded to this information by making dignity for patients and workers their primary organizing issues (see *In These Times*, April 6, 1983). Broad civil rights support—including messages from such leaders as Julian Bond, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Coretta Scott King—proved particularly valuable in the South, where the unions rarely lost an election.

The emphasis on patient care also helped win public support for the drive. The unions' studies of state records on nursing homes revealed that Beverly had below-average ratings on adequacy of patient care and billed government agencies for above-average administrative costs. The unions used this information to oppose applications for the "certificates of need" required before a new health care facility opens. They also fought issuance of industrial revenue bonds that provide public financial support for some nursing home construction.

The unions also embarrassed the company with well publicized shareholder resolutions on patient care. They won support from such unlikely allies as Chase Manhattan Bank, which controlled a large block of Beverly stock. To the unions, this proved that sophisticated investors worry that adverse publicity on quality of care can endanger the financial success of a nursing home company.

The agreement suspends the public-pressure portion of the campaign. Instead of going public with patient-care complaints, the unions say they will now work with management for improvement.

Steve Askin is Washington bureau chief for the National Catholic Reporter.

Dems

Continued from page 3

procity in our relations with the Soviet Union, reliability in our relations with our friends and allies and restraint in our relations with the Third World."

Striking a *de rigueur* note of toughness, he then spelled out aims of negotiations with the Soviet Union, which include a freeze on nuclear and anti-satellite weapons, a joint crisis control center and action to halt spread of nuclear weapons and plutonium.

While Mondale has defended his support for auto domestic content legislation and other trade restraints, arguing that the world market does not fit textbook models, Hart has stressed revitalization of U.S. industries—without addressing the question of the character of the international marketplace. Neither candidate has shared Jackson's criticism of multinational companies' shift of jobs overseas.

Hart said, "Reliability to our allies does not mean we abandon our deterrent

strength to suit either their neutralist demonstrators or their nervous politicians," but maintaining a flexible military force "designed for deterrence and response, not first-strike attack." Later he argued for private talks with NATO to restructure the alliance since the U.S. cannot indefinitely maintain its current troop levels in Europe.

"Not every Third World problem is America's problem for which there is an American solution," he said. "Every Third World revolution is not a struggle between East and West.... Poverty and hunger and repression have caused many more such revolutions than Moscow and Havana combined." He criticized Reagan for a foreign policy by Marines—in Lebanon (Hart was far ahead of Mondale in calling for troop withdrawal), Grenada (Mondale criticized keeping the press out) and Central America. Jackson has been more critical on all such interventions and argued for a more tolerant, cooperative relation with the Third World.

Larry Smith, now with Harvard's Kennedy School, was Hart's chief of staff from 1978 to 1982 and an early manager of the "presidential enterprise." In ex-

plaining Hart's views, Smith said that they had seen the party not as a set of power blocs but as an open space that could be occupied by defining a vision of the country and the party. They calculated that most people shared Democratic Party values but rejected Democratic means. By focusing on values for the future, Hart's campaigners figured he could run against both Reagan and the Democratic past.

Claiming American pragmatism as its ancestry, Hart strategists wanted to take the military seriously—as they felt Democratic liberals did not—but make it fit a new strategic conception of the globe that envisioned the U.S. as dominating the seas, not becoming embroiled in land wars everywhere or relying on politically unstable land bases.

Arms control would be presented as a way of enhancing security, not just cutting weapons. That's why Hart introduced his Strategic Talks on Prevention (STOP) proposal shortly before the freeze, Hart aid Jan Nolan said. Although Hart praised the freeze proposal, he didn't co-sponsor it since he had his own proposal. Likewise, Nolan said, in the original version that Hart supported, the buildup eliminated two old warheads for every new one deployed—conceived as a way of discouraging new multiple-warhead missiles, although later it was converted by Reagan into a subterfuge to get the MX missile.

Hart did not make clear what modernized alternative he would favor, Nolan said. Although he supports a sea-based deterrent, he has not taken a position on the sea-based Cruise missile, which Mondale opposes.

"There isn't a scintilla of difference on arms control or civil rights or basic values between Hart and Mondale," Smith maintains, "and it's fruitless for either to say they aren't as committed as the other. The issue is what strategic, political, governmental approach is more likely to be effective."

For example, Hart concluded that Carter's Rapid Deployment Force was unlikely to be able to stop any cutoff of Persian Gulf oil by military means. Therefore, the only alternative was energy independence.

But Smith did see one difference in that Hart represented an effort to find a "post-Vietnam synthesis" that understands "our nation is not omnipotent and omniscient...[but] retains a unique, special and ethically important role and strength in the world.... Here you have a post-Vietnam, tough-minded American who says I really do have a stake there [in the world]. I have to do something. I am

willing to consider use of force, but it won't work, so here's a different policy.

"If American people believe you're tough-minded to start with," Smith argued, "they may have confidence in your using force as a last resort." Here John F. Kennedy is their model.

Would Hart's new strategy for a *Pax Americana* end up with his own version of a Bay of Pigs or Vietnam, policies of Democrats of the past, like Walter Mondale? Hart has at least decided he wants voters to think the answer is "no." As the Illinois campaign ended, he said in a TV interview that Mondale "didn't learn the lessons of Vietnam," and Mondale gave signs that this was true as he defended keeping troops in Central America even as the covert war was ended: "We can't just pull out and run away." ■

George

Continued from page 2

under Hart or Mondale, or, as rumors buzzed, the UN ambassador. He could be the populist who attains his long-run objective despite all the set-backs, restyling the Democratic center to accommodate detente, arms control and such peaceful re-industrialization as upgrading the rail system. Then again, he could become a public prophet who warns of the evil consequences inherent in the present drift and of the necessity for a true moral awakening.

"McGovern for World Peace," a Massachusetts office staffer answered when I called the day after the primary. It was a little joke to lighten spirits, but it revealed a still-unarticulated aspiration for something to continue the collective effort. I wanted to know what the McGovernites would do next. "I don't understand your question," a tired voice came back. "Do you mean support other candidates?"

That summed up the ambiguous accomplishments of the McGovern campaign—never wholly a horse-race candidacy or a facet of a larger movement. One could not observe McGovern at close range without a shiver of inspiration at the man's vision, without a sense of the gloomy sea-change in American politics that the 1972 defeat increasingly reveals, without an outside hope for the future. How that future could arrive was a conundrum McGovern's candidacy dramatized better than any other event in this political season.

Paul Buhle was state press secretary for McGovern's campaign in Rhode Island.

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WRITE TO CENTER FOR POPULAR ECONOMICS ★ BOX 785 ★ AMHERST, MA 01004

By Diana Johnstone

P A R I S

THE TITLE OF YVES MONTAND'S latest hit, "Vive la Crise!," sounded like a musical comedy. Instead, it was a 90-minute prime time television special that showed French people how they should react to the economic crisis: in a word, positively.

Montand was there to show the way in his role as narrator, interviewer and, above all, Mr. Frenchman who makes his pilgrim's progress through the facts and statistics, through the selected images of the past and imagined views of the future. A familiar, reassuring Montand was there to ask the questions and make the objections viewers might think of.

The gist of the program was that the economic crisis in France wasn't as bad as in other times and places, that things could get better or worse, depending on the enterprising spirit and success of individual French men and women. The economic crisis could be an opportunity for France.

Lately people have been calling Montand the "French Reagan." He has denied comparable political ambitions, noting modestly that, unlike Ronald Reagan, his own show-business career has been so successful that he doesn't need to change professions. But what the Reagan experience has shown is that actor, salesman and political figure may, in the days of television, be one and the same profession.

Like Reagan, Montand, at 62, has behind him a career full of nice-guy roles that guarantee public identification and sympathy. And he's a bigger star with more talent. His private life, as known to the public, is more exciting than Reagan's. Montand seduced Marilyn Monroe without even trying and talked politics in the Kremlin with Khrushchev.

In his youth he was an idealistic leftist, but he has grown wiser with age (and money). This full-blown public persona made its debut in an evening-long TV interview on January 2 in which Montand displayed the angry anti-Communism of a deceived fellow traveler with far more charm and candor than Whittaker Chambers. This performance made Montand easily the hottest property ever to hit the political show-and-tell business.

A recent TV special starring Yves Montand portrayed France's woes as those of a country in a "rich man's crisis."

After playing himself on January 2, Montand was ready to play Mr. Frenchman in the February 22 "Vive la Crise!" After selling himself, he went to work, like Reagan, selling other people's ideas. He read a script whose principal author was top technocrat Michel Albert, chairman of Assurances Generales de France (the country's largest insurance company, nationalized at the end of World War II). The broadcast was given enormous advance publicity, ensuring that some 30 percent of French TV sets were tuned in.

In what was billed as a revolutionary wedding of the media, on the day of the broadcast Serge July's daily *Liberation* in association with the publisher Seuil brought out a special magazine also entitled "Vive la Crise!" with Montand's photo on the cover. When *Liberation* staff members, who are still being paid militant wages despite the paper's commercial success, complained at being

"dragged into a political propaganda operation, July insisted that his motivations were not political. He is just crazy about media, and this was a great media coup.

His leftist past far behind him, July has indeed graduated into the kind of politics that calls itself apolitical and the ideology of "ideology is dead." He belongs to an elite new circle that calls itself the *Fondation Saint Simon* and is devoted to popularizing the ideas of the liberal-libertarian "second left"—notably that French enterprise must be freed from the con-

straints of the welfare state. Otherwise, France risks missing out on the "third industrial revolution" based on electronic computers and becoming "a sort of Afghanistan," as Albert put it.

It's not that such theoreticians have abandoned their earlier ideals. But it turns out to be difficult to get *autogestion* to work with workers, or to liberate oppressed peoples. *Autogestion* and liberation work much more easily with private entrepreneurs.

Thus the good example held up by "Vive la Crise!" was Annette Roux, who inherited the family shipyards when she was 21 and has turned it into an internationally competitive manufacturer of pleasure craft. Just in case some viewers might feel it difficult to emulate an heiress, there was Montand himself, whose modest origins as son of an Italian immigrant worker are legendary.

Among the Frenchmen who were not watching Montand that night were the truck drivers who were blocking the nation's highways in the most disruptive of the neo-corporatist actions that have become habitual in today's France. Many of them were former employees who had gone deeply in debt to own their own trucks, their own businesses, and were beginning to despair that they could ever make a go of it. Every tax, every delay at customs, every regulation (as on number of driving hours) was resented, seen as a threat to survival. "We'll make them eat rats in Paris!" one shouted angrily. This was the spirit of rugged individualism and free enterprise as it really exists in France.

But the technocrats behind "Vive la Crise!" have something else in mind. They would prefer a more American-style enterprising spirit, with lots of winners and with losers that lose quietly. They lament the fact that in France the spirit of class struggle—on the top as on the bottom—has prevailed over the enterprising spirit. Workers remember how the bourgeoisie slaughtered the Communards; too much cooperation is a sellout. The "second left" would like to end the class war, throw it out with the old industrial society that is dying, and bring in a new political culture more suitable to the new electronic civilization dawning. President Mitterrand has discreetly encouraged them.

"Vive la Crise!" was carefully designed to help wipe out the Marxist culture of the "first left" by presenting, not a rival analysis, (analysis is a bad habit of the "first left") but a series of images whose comparison should produce a particular attitude.

The program began by comparing today's economic crisis in France with "la crise" in other times and places: today in the slums of Mexico City, in the '30s of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Comparison of images produces binary responses: acceptance or rejection. Compared to the others, France is in a "rich man's crisis." So stop complaining, the program urged. Look at this kitchen of the '50s: no refrigerator, no hot water, no dishwasher. ...Now look at this kitchen today: you've come a long way, baby.

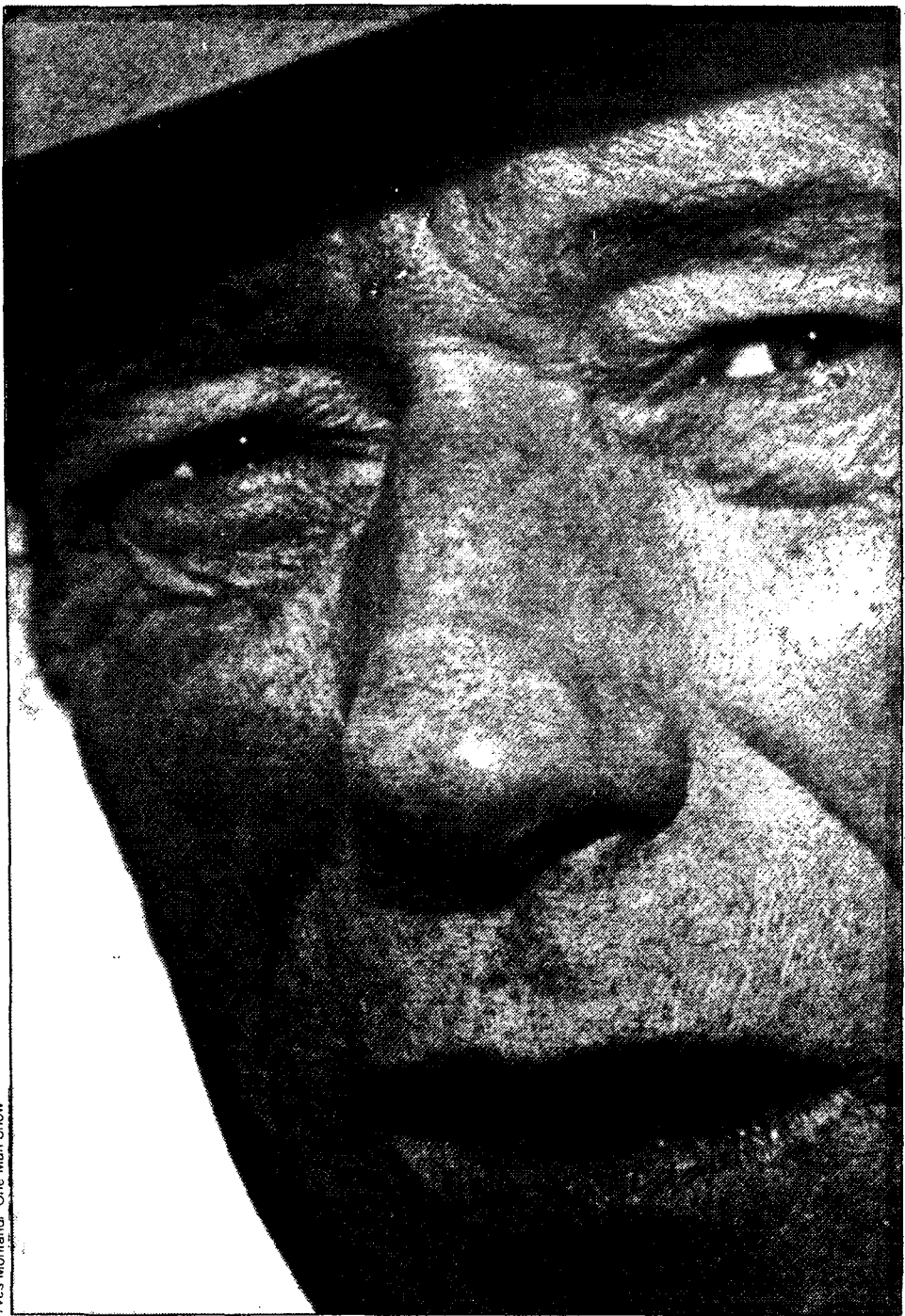
There was no attempt to explain why things went wrong. Oil prices just suddenly went up, and it was the Arabs' fault. Not a word was uttered about the

inflation caused by the Vietnam war, falling profit rates on industrial investment or the international financial manipulations of multinational corporations.

Any remedies for "la crise"? A few left and far-right proposals were reduced to the most simple-minded slogans and parodied in a series of "all you have to do is..." Example: a mayor decides to solve the unemployment problem by hiring all his town's unemployed. Everybody's happy at first, but after a while there's no money to pay their salaries. You see?

FRANCE

Montand's enterprising spirit



Yves Montand: One Man Show

Left-wing remedies won't work.

Of course, the program had its own implied utopia. All you have to do is unify Europe. A fantasy sequence showed the U.S. running second best to a United States of Europe. President Maggie Thatcher put Reagan (still U.S. president in 1994) in his place, while European Defense Minister Helmut Kohl hastily dispatched Soviet-American disarmament negotiations in order to get around to the serious business of the threat from the Islamic bloc, which had swept across North Africa to Gibraltar.

Nothing guarantees that propaganda has its desired effect. The world view presented in "Vive la Crise!" suggests that its creators want to inspire a European patriotism able to incite successful competition with Japan and the U.S. But this effort may inadvertently contribute to channeling the mounting fear and aggressiveness in French society against the rest of the world, and especially the Third World.

Europe used to be the center of the world, viewers were reminded. But no longer. The southern populations are growing as European populations drop, and those growing masses in the south are armed! "Vive la Crise!" took a lingering look at the vast arsenals of certain Third World countries, without a hint of criti-

IN THESE TIMES MARCH 28-APRIL 3, 1984 7
cism of the industrialized countries that have fed the Third World arms race (notably France, number three arms exporter after the USSR and the U.S.).

Is there danger of war? Alain Minc, another member of the *Fondation Saint Simon* and financial director of the nationalized conglomerate, Saint-Gobain, explained that it was not the New Deal or Keynesian economic policy that had cured the economic crisis of the '30s, but rather World War II. He optimistically added that war would not be the solution to the

By Aishah Rahman

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, ON March 11, 1959, a play by a petite, sweet-voiced black woman exploded on the Broadway stage, shattering black stereotypes and heralding the smouldering volcanoes that erupted in the coming decade. It was no accident that Lorraine Hansberry's pen probed the major issues of the '60s—American racial integration and African liberation—in her initial drama, *A Raisin in the Sun*. Her vision was a conscious one and in subsequent dramas she went on to deal with problems that still plague us: the disengagement of the American liberal, sexism, colonialism, capitalism vs. socialism, war and peace and the survival of our planet.

A look at her collected work (five plays, 60 magazine and newspaper articles, poems and speeches) and a chronology of her life reveals a major American writer whose life was one of commitment, whose pen was her spear and whose ultimate cause was social change for human betterment. Hansberry battled, in her own words, "against the illusions of her own era and a deluded American culture." In her life's activities and in the dramas she created, she defiantly crossed boundaries and transcended doctrine, while still involving herself in the pressing issues of the era. When she cautioned the black writer "against isolation from the affairs of the world," Hansberry also realized that in order to possess a comprehensive world view, black writers must first look inward, and toward their own people. This was the seminal philosophy of the black arts movement of the '60s and made Hansberry the literary foremother of the writers of that period.

How then, could a major black, female writer who declared that "we as Negroes or as women should never accept our place," and who portrayed women of all complexions crying out for release from the prison of so-called "womanhood," be largely ignored by women's studies departments and even castigated by some blacks as an "establishment artist" whose work was not a call to revolution?

The answer is simple. Although Hansberry was committed to her own race and gender, was a Pan Africanist and a dedicated socialist, she espoused humanistic values, not doctrinaire politics, and avoided narrow dogmas and sterile revolutionary rhetoric. Her unswerving search for truth enabled Hansberry, among other things, to voice the struggles of the black masses and declare that the "black middle class allowed themselves to be used as obstacles to the aspirations of the masses," even though she herself was born to material comfort. This woman's refusal to qualify the truth enabled her to be a pro-integrationist and a socialist who could defend separatist black nationalists on occasion and a married woman who could actively support the fledgling gay rights movement of the '50s. Such a stance will always anger critics who try to mold a major writer's life and art to their own political and social preferences. But Hansberry's life and art stand firm in their declaration of her courage, commitment and complexity. She was indeed "her own woman."

Growing up.

In the '60s, a confluence of political events and popular tastes had an adverse effect on public regard for Hansberry and her work. Macho rhetoric infused black politics. Encouraged by the Moynihan "Report on the Black Family," the epic figure of the black matriarch, one Hansberry paid a loving tribute to in her portrait of *Raisin's* Lena Younger, became a poisoned image. Atavistic as it may seem now, the very fact that Lorraine Hansberry was a commercially successful black female writer made her unpopular with a segment of black intellectuals. These detractors, pointing out that Hansberry was born into a life of relative



material comfort, considered her automatically alienated from the black masses. A closer look at Hansberry's background would have revealed that she grew up in a middle-class family that fought at the barricades of racial injustice and was extremely committed to social action.

In the '30s and '40s the line dividing the black middle from the black lower class on Chicago's south side was not clearly drawn. Young Lorraine went to the same schools as and played with poorer children. Her father's life was a classic example of an Afro-American man whose American dream dried up "like a raisin in the sun."

Carl Hansberry was a talented, brilliant man who believed the American way would eventually bring true democracy to his America. Hansberry was a realtor who spent a personal fortune in an attempt to fight housing segregation and abolish Chicago's black ghettos. In 1938, Hansberry moved his family into a "restricted" area near the University of Chicago in order to test real estate covenants that barred blacks. Mobs threw bricks and concrete slabs through the windows. Hansberry filed a law suit that challenged the legality of restricted covenants.

While Lorraine's father was in court fighting the battle with NAACP lawyers, her mother was at home guarding the four children with a loaded German luger. The Hansberry family was finally evicted, after losing the suit and many appeals.

In 1940, Carl Hansberry ran for Congress as a Republican and lost, but that same year he won a U.S. Supreme Court decision in the now famous case (*Hansberry vs. Lee*) against restricted covenants. But it was a pyrrhic victory; in practice the covenants continued. Carl Hansberry died in Mexico in 1946, an embittered

expatriate who fled American racism and planned to relocate his family. Another influence in Hansberry's formative years and probably the genesis of her strong Pan Africanism was her uncle, William Leo Hansberry, the distinguished Africanist at Howard University. The Hansberry living room was a center of black cultural, political and economic life, in which such figures as W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, Duke Ellington, Walter White, Joe Louis and Jesse Owens gathered. Thus young Hansberry was exposed to art, Marxism and black pride at an early age.

Hansberry came into womanhood during the '50s, an epoch of transition from reactionary conservatism—McCarthyism, the House UnAmerican Activities Committee, the execution of the Rosenbergs, the murder of Emmet Till—to the burgeoning civil rights movement, the Montgomery bus boycotts, Martin Luther King. The FBI began its Hansberry file when, as chair of the Young Progressives of America at the University of Wisconsin, she wrote a letter to the student newspaper protesting discrimination on campus. Surveillance continued when she moved to New York in 1950, became involved in left political movements and began writing for the Marxist newspaper published by Paul Robeson, *Freedomways*. On the editorial board were noted leftists Shirley Graham DuBois and Louis Burnham.

Hammering away at both national and international issues, Hansberry wrote such articles as "Negroes Cast in Same Old TV Show," "Sojourn for Truth and Justice to Washington by 100 Black Women," "Ghana's Move to Independence," "The Kenyans Struggle Against the British," and several articles calling for "No More Hiroshimas." In 1952 the State Department finally confiscated Hansberry's passport after she attended

the Intercontinental Peace Congress in Montevideo, Uruguay, in which she represented Paul Robeson (unable to attend because he had been denied a passport).

Conscious feminist.

A look at Hansberry's female characters will reveal that she was not an accidental feminist but a mature writer conscious of women's dilemmas. Although her women are not feminist idealizations consciously struggling against patriarchy, they are women with strengths and weaknesses, unfulfilled potential and limitations imposed on them simply because of their gender, and they are all aware that something is not right with their lives. Consider the fear and courage of Ruth, in *A Raisin in the Sun*, who chooses abortion (in a period when it was expensive, illegal and dangerous) rather than bring another child into her crowded southside ghetto flat. That her decision is contrary to the mores of her culture and to everything she believes in makes it all the more courageous. Or Rissa, in "The Drinking Gourd," who under the weight of sexism and slavery accommodates the system for the survival of her children until she at last becomes a revolutionary. What about Mavis, in *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, whose marriage is a mockery and whose character is an indictment of farcical marriages that thwart the intellects and waste the potential of millions of middle-class women. In the same play is Gloria, a powerful portrait of a prostitute—without the romantic myth that make the physical and psychological exploitation of women seem amusing or glamorous.

In tune with her era, Hansberry dealt mainly with political and racial themes while sexism, prostitution and homosexuality were strong secondary themes. Had she lived, it is obvious that the problems of women were to be her primary

First light of a new day



A scene from Hansberry's 1959 play, "A Raisin in the Sun."

fect it had on their lives, whites felt that *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, with its mostly white cast, attacked them. Blacks accused Hansberry of using black themes to break into theater and then, after having become successful, abandoning them for whiter pastures.

Such was the burden of a black writer who dared to write about various themes in American life, creating black and white characters, who refused to be restricted to "The Negro Question."

Africa vs. colonialism.

Hansberry was also absorbed by African liberation. In *Les Blancs* she probed the question of whether bloodshed was inevitable in the African quest for liberation from colonialism. The drama is a dialog between blacks and whites and forces both sides to confrontation and awareness. Again, in its balanced search for the truth, *Les Blancs* managed to trouble both white liberals and black nationalists. *Playboy* said the play "advocates genocide of non-whites as a solution to the race problem."

Hansberry challenged American separatist black nationalists at the historic 1964 Town Hall meeting, "The Black Revolution and the White Backlash": "Some of the first people who have died so far in this struggle have been white men," she said. "It's not a question of reading anybody out." Yet when Undersecretary to the United Nations Dr. Ralph Bunche apologized to the world for the American black nationalists' United Nations demonstration protesting the killing of Congolese patriot Patrice Lumumba, Hansberry was outraged and wrote a letter to the *New York Times* in defense and support of the demonstration.

When a crafty white announcer stated that black self-defense could be equated with outright advocacy of violence, Hansberry (probably flashing back to her gun-toting mother guarding her children against the racist mob) curtly replied, "Of course, if someone comes in your home and community and does ill you try your best to kill him." But her concern with man's violence and predilection for blowing up the world was seen in the short play, *What Use Are Flowers*, a delightful fable and a departure from her usual realistic style.

Unaffiliated with any specific political creed, Hansberry was a dedicated socialist. For her, socialism was the only humanistic politics, and Hansberry reasoned that it was the duty of oppressed people to search for more humanistic values so they would not end up imitating their oppressors. It is almost as if she foresaw the contemporary power struggles on the African continent. Although Hansberry spoke of a socialist organization as the "universal condition of mankind" and one that was necessary for group survival, the writer dreamed of a socialism that would allow varying cultures and different political parties.

Talented, committed, courageous and passionate, Lorraine Hansberry was definitely "her own woman." Her work and life is a bright light that illuminates the way for all committed artists everywhere who believe that art must have direct relevance to the social and moral problems of the age. It will continue to shine. ■

Aishah Rahman is a New York playwright.

Published works by Lorraine Hansberry include:

To Be Young, Gifted and Black (an autobiography); *A Raisin in the Sun* and *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*; *Lorraine Hansberry: The Collected Last Plays*, New American Library; *The Movement: Documentary of a Struggle for Equality* (a photohistory written for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), Simon and Schuster. *All the Dark and Beautiful Warriors* will be published in 1985.



Hansberry espoused humanistic values, not doctrinaire politics.

Window investigates the disillusionment and despair of the American liberal.

Both blacks and whites had trouble with the audacity of this young black

woman who dared to break traditions with her iconoclastic dramas. Used to an apartheid theater, where blacks were confined to writing about racism and the ef-

themes. Her unfinished works include a play about Mary Wollstonecraft, the 18th century feminist, and a novel-in-progress, *All the Dark and Beautiful Warriors*, that she worked on from 1956 till her death in 1965. Its first section, published last year in the *Village Voice*, centers on Candace, a young, middle-class black woman from Chicago's south side, and her internal life and approaching womanhood.

Hansberry outspokenly supported the early gay rights movement. In her analytical and even-minded style, she wrote letters to *The Ladder*, a lesbian publication in May and August 1957. "I am glad as heck that you exist.... I feel that women, without wishing to foster any strict separatist notions, homo or hetero, indeed have a need for their own publications and organizations...." In the same letter, "What the homosexual wants and needs is not *autonomy* from the human race but integration into it." She counseled in a letter dated August 1957 that many lesbians were forced into the "social trap" of marriage because "they are not prepared to risk a life alien to what they have been taught was their natural destiny and their only expectation for economic security." Hansberry believed "homosexual persecution" was anti-feminist and issued a call to women to redefine moral and ethical values so that their lives would not be based on the present moral structure that never accepted women's equality and therefore was immoral itself.

She was also militant about Jewish rights. Jewishness was not something often projected on the Broadway stage. Going against all advice—and the unstated rules for commercial success—Hansberry wrote a drama with a Jewish hero and a Jewish name in the title. Taking her own advice that black writers should "artistically examine all the questions which plague the intellect and the spirit of man," *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's*

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

JACKSON

JOHN JUDIS, IN HIS CHARACTERIZATION of Jesse Jackson as a beleaguered candidate, harassed by the Jewish Defense League (*ITT*, March 14), purposely ignores two facts:

1) Harassment is an integral part of the political process. Socialists have been rightfully "guilty" of it.

2) When the surface was scratched, it revealed an ugly form of bigotry in Jackson's use of the slur "Hymie."

Why did Jackson use such an anti-Semitic expression? Since he is a trained Christian minister, I am beginning to wonder whether anti-Semitism is part of the mother's milk of Christian theology. Or is he just another political demagogue, a street bigot in mufti?

—Gerald H. Evans
Rochester, N.Y.

IN THE TRENCHES

SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE MISTAKEN my intent in referring to Sonia Johnson's Citizens Party presidential campaign in my letter (*ITT*, Feb. 29) criticizing the Minneapolis anti-pornography ordinance that I'd better take another crack at making my meaning clear.

My use of Sonia Johnson's name was for the stated purpose of putting in context an opinion that was likely to get me instantly branded an Aunt Tom by the feminist community.

Johnson spends a great deal of energy persuading people that her views are not anti-male. On a smaller scale, I spend a good deal of mine explaining that my views (when I dare to utter them) are not anti-feminist. Thus my attempt to "telegraph" that support for feminist politics and tolerance for pornography are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

One more clarification. There may well be pornographic depictions that go beyond "perfectly natural impulses";

but I maintain that Mother Nature is not a cruel tease, that the urge to fuck is perfectly natural and legitimate, and that as long as women insist on regarding their bodies as shrines and men as muddy-booted violators or, at best, as abject supplicants, there will be hostility between men and women. All people have the right to say "no," but to take offense at the proposal is absurd. The responsibility for sexual disarmament does not lie exclusively with men. Until women too get up the courage to declare themselves CO's in the war between the sexes, the bloodbath will go on.

—Emily DeHuff
Chicago

ROOTS

I AM A NEW READER OF YOUR NEWSPAPER, and I appreciate the information it provides which rarely appears in the regular daily press.

Although articles in your newspaper on Reagan's foreign policy in Central America are revealing, the root cause is not discussed. It is now more obvious to many people that our tax dollars are used to support fascist military dictatorships, but the main reason as to why is not addressed.

Reagan's domestic and foreign policies have revolved primarily around the promotion and protection of the profit interests of multi-national corporations. And Latin dictatorships are supported because they allow the exploitation of their oppressed and poverty-stricken people for cheap labor and the rape of natural resources by American corporations. Leftist governments are strongly opposed and even undermined only because they do not permit such exploitation of their people and country, and not of any concern for freedom and democracy. Hundreds of American corporations relocate to Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and even Haiti, for cheap, semi-slave labor, leaving behind millions of unemployed Americans, hungry and homeless. And U.S. intervention in Nicaragua to overthrow its government and bring back the good old days of corporate control and exploitation is a blatant violation of the Neutrality Act, a federal law that makes such an action a crime.

—Abe Morochnick
Chelsea, Mass.

QUERY

FOR A COMMEMORATION OF THE 50th anniversary of Upton Sinclair's EPIC campaign for governor of California I should very much like to hear from anyone who participated in any capacity in that campaign, pro or con.

—H. Morton Newman
Berkeley, Calif.

INQUIRING SPIRIT

IN THESE TIMES IS PROVIDING AN ABSOLUTELY first rate service. I applaud you in every area, especially in the high level of writing and your concern for thorough coverage. I also appreciate the openness and inquiring spirit that inspires *ITT*. The sectarian spirit is killing. Commitment must be held, of course, but so must the will to dialog and to inquiry. *ITT* is necessary.

—L.E. Gerber
Boone, N.C.

WHAT ROT & HOGWASH

JOURNALIST JUDIS (*ITT*, MARCH 14) refers to "the accumulated wisdom of the leadership [AFL-CIO] to bear upon the thought of the rank and file."

Laughable. The rank and file learned long ago their "leadership" belongs to the dividenders. Supposed leadership in big unions is like supposed public servants at foggy bottom. Both union bosses and politicians have deaf ears for the toilers' needs, the wealth producers.

"...[A]ccumulated wisdom..." what rot; utter nonsense. These whatevers haven't cracked a book since they left high school.

What's one of the rank-and-file priorities, a big one? Accumulated fatigue—both neural and physical. Thus the four-hour day and three-day week no overtime which robotization turns into an imperative; job-sharing overdue. Post office and libraries good beginning places, especially the former.

Another of Judis' misrepresentations: Reagan's 1980 "landslide." Reagan is not popular—he will not take on the armaments racketeers and halt the armament vortex ruining this nation, ripening it for Hitlerism.

Just because AFL-CIO sends annual

greetings doesn't mean you have to cater to these traitors with such hogwash.

—I. Riggs
Hastings, Neb.

GAMESMANSHIP

AFTER READING THE ARTICLE ON video games by Ariel Dorfman (*ITT*, Feb. 29) I thought I would call your readers' attention to a video game that is bucking the reactionary trend.

I recently purchased a video game for my Commodore 64 computer called "Defend Nicaragua!" Rather than another hopeless and apocalyptic game, "Defend Nicaragua" is a game about defeating the U.S.-backed *contras* who are trying to overthrow the Sandinista government. Though the game is limited to the military aspects of the struggle in Nicaragua, it does a good job depicting the military realities facing that country. The game includes, for example, the ever present danger of a U.S. naval blockade. Also relying too heavily on Cuban aid to offset the shortage of ammunition can result in increased aid to the *contras* from the U.S., and CIA planes drop *contras* into Nicaraguan territory.

Each time the game is played it is different. The *contras* come from Honduras sometimes, and sometimes you must contend with both Honduran-based former *Somocistas* and Eden Pastora's Costa Rican-based forces.

It should come as no surprise that this game has not been picked up by any of the big computer companies. According to a recent interview in the *Valley Advocate* (western Massachusetts), the one-person operation is called P.C. Games, where the P.C. stands for "politically correct."

It is also interesting to note that P.C. Games donates \$1.00 for each sale to the National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People. Pac-Man cannot make that claim. Whether you are a video-addict or not, it's pleasant to know there is an alternative to the meaningless violence so common in most video games today. Bert Ollman move over, forget Class Struggle—Defend Nicaragua!

—Martin Springwells
Northampton, Mass.

The game is available from P.C. Games for \$7.50 on cassette only. Write to: P.C. Games, 95 Brown Ave., Roslindale, Mass. 02131

CORRECTION

In his article, "Mondale: no life of the party" (*ITT*, March 14), John Judis reversed the roles played by the AFL-CIO's COPE and the Mass State AFL-CIO in the Mondale campaign. The state AFL-CIO, lacking a passionate commitment to the contest, hired a professional calling firm to telephone union members, and consented reluctantly (when pressured by national COPE) to use union staffers the second time around. The general point Judis made still holds: the AFL-CIO national leaders try to impose a "quick fix" not only on the Democratic Party, but also on their own state officials and rank and file, with uneven and sometimes embarrassing results.

CORRECTION

In last week's story about National Education Association (NEA) President Mary Futrell, part of a sentence was inadvertently dropped. It should have read: When Futrell was elected in July, NEA became the only nationwide labor union headed by a black woman and the largest private U.S. agency of any kind being headed by a black person.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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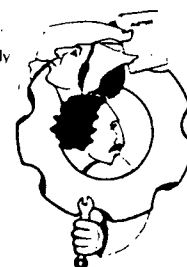
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By David Osborne

THE LEADING DEMOCRATIC candidate for president wants to slap a surtax on the affluent, hike business taxes, adopt a simpler and more progressive income tax system, spend billions of dollars and create thousands of jobs rebuilding America's highways and bridges, end all U.S. military aid to El Salvador and the Nicaraguan mercenaries, use pension funds to rebuild the economy and impose tax penalties on corporate mergers. The candidate is not Walter Mondale.

To labor leaders and many on the left, Gary Hart is something of a turncoat, an opportunist who has deserted the real Democratic Party. Walter Mondale is the true Democrat, a man who stands up for working people, the poor and the elderly.

However, labor leaders and leftists do not choose the party's nominee; the voters do. And by all indications, Democratic voters prefer Hart to Mondale. They see Hart as the one candidate who has come to grips with the realities of the '80s, articulating a new set of policies capable of straightening out the American economy. They identify Mondale, in contrast, with the failed policies of the past—policies now supported mainly by labor leaders and old pols who are hopelessly out of touch with the American people.

How accurate are these perceptions? Let us start with the "new ideas" phenomenon.

During the week before and after the New Hampshire primary, pollsters watched with astonishment as their soundings reflected the most volatile electorate they had ever seen. In the space of a week, Hart went from 7 percent in the national polls to the top of the heap. He did it on the strength of his "new ideas" theme, which made perfect sense to New Hampshire voters.

To ignore this phenomenon—or call it a fad—is to bury one's head in the sand. Hart's meteoric rise reflects a deep hunger for a new Democratic politics in America, a hunger born of profound disillusionment with Democratic performances over the last 20 years. When people look back at Democratic administrations, they see Vietnam, inflation, energy shortages and falling standards of living. They want something new.

This current has been evident for almost a decade. In 1976, the two most successful candidates—Jimmy Carter and Jerry Brown—both projected images of new ideas and a new approach. They disdained the large, bureaucratic programs characteristic of the Great Society, and they identified with rising middle-income anger about inflation and taxes. In 1980, John Anderson carried the torch, however poorly. Now Gary Hart is proving just how deep the current runs.

Walter Mondale does not seem to understand this. For two years, he ran on his experience and his endorsements, both of which tie him to the past. Is it surprising that the overwhelming majority of Democrats who tell pollsters they want a change in the direction of government choose Hart?

Mondale has counter-attacked by calling Hart's new ideas "bunk." "Where is the beef?" he asks over and over. But in fact, Hart *does* have new ideas, by the dozens.

Consider foreign policy, which receives little attention in the debate between Hart and Mondale partisans. Mondale represents a generation of Democratic leaders who refused to confront the issues raised by Vietnam. He personally ducked the issue for years, and in recent months he has ducked on Lebanon and Grenada. His foreign policy remains grounded in Cold War liberalism. Does anyone really believe Fritz Mondale would pull the plug on the Salvadoran government, acquiescing in a victory by the left?

Hart, in contrast, made his choice early: with George McGovern, he gave years of his life to the anti-war cause. He has been quick to call for troop withdrawals from Lebanon and Grenada, and he has pledged to cut off military aid to the Sal-



PERSPECTIVES

Voters will peel off, Reagan will win in a Hartless election

vadoran government. Recently he has risked a great deal by promising never to land American troops in the Persian Gulf. If elected, Hart would be the first American to promise unequivocal opposition to military support for corrupt or dictatorial governments facing revolution. That is a new idea, and an important one. Mondale calls it "weakness" and "naivete."

More important to voters, however, are Hart's ideas on the economy. Hart spent a good deal of 1981 and '82 talking with economists and others about their ideas for restructuring the American economy.

The result is a mild form of industrial policy, the centerpiece of which would be industry-wide "modernization and growth agreements" between business and labor. In return for public and private capital, business would be asked to modernize its plants and retrain workers, while labor would be asked to tie future wage hikes to increases in productivity.

Hart also says he would use tax incentives to stimulate research and development, worker ownership and job retraining. He would create a new, tax-free class of stock for investment in new plants, new equipment or new research and development. He has proposed "Venture Development Centers" in every state, to give entrepreneurs financial and technical assistance. And he would adopt a "tax-based incomes policy" to contain inflation, penalizing corporations and employees who raise prices or wages higher than federal guidelines.

Clearly, this is not enough. But equally clearly, it is a step in the right direction. Hart understands that if the U.S. is to remain competitive with Japan and Western Europe, our government must intervene in private investment decisions, steering capital into productive use. Hart's economic advisors are innovators, and his instincts are with the future. When faced with economic difficulties, he would be more likely to experiment, as Franklin Roosevelt did, than to fall back

on the policies of the past.

Mondale's instincts appear to be very different. He has shown little understanding of the fundamental changes necessary to reignite economic growth without also rekindling inflation.

Mondale's campaign stresses the necessity of protecting the gains made by workers and poor people. This is noble but inadequate. Unless the American economy is put back on solid footing, everyone will lose. Until the pie is expanding once again, the federal government will be helpless to protect the poor.

Gary Hart understands this. "If the pie is not growing, then it's awfully hard to get those who pay for the social programs—middle-income working people—to pay the taxes necessary to meet the human needs," he recently told the *Washington Post*. "What all of us ran into in the '70s was a constant barrage from moderate working people who were fed up with high taxes, or fed up with programs that don't work."

"The best way to guarantee protection for those who need society's help is to put money in the pockets of the wage-earning middle class. Then, if you want to pass a program of nutrition for the elderly or home heating assistance or school lunch programs, they'll go along."

Gary Hart also understands that the best federal "welfare" program is a jobs program. His proposals for public works spending—to rebuild our infrastructure and to insulate 12 million homes—would probably help the jobless more than anything Mondale has promised.

Finally, there is the issue of electability. Exit polls have consistently shown Mondale beating Hart among traditional, loyal Democrats: blacks, the poor, the elderly and those who feel threatened economically. Hart beats Mondale, however, among independents, the young, the affluent and educated and those who voted for Anderson or Reagan in 1980. In most states, Hart has defeated Mondale among both liberals and conservatives, showing that his new ideas theme tran-

scends traditional left/right categories, appealing to something deeper in many voters.

The Mondale constituency will vote Democratic no matter who is the candidate. But should Mondale win the nomination, many Hart voters would peel off to Reagan, Anderson (who intends to run again) or indifference. Clearly, Hart has the broader potential base. Given his age, his strong stands on women's issues and his reliance on women as top aides and advisors, Hart would also make the stronger appeal to female voters.

Perhaps most important, Hart would deprive Reagan of his favorite issues. Reagan would like nothing better than to run once again against the failed policies of the Democratic past. Such a campaign would be disastrous for the Democrats. Hart has his vulnerable spots—his inexperience, his role as George McGovern's campaign manager—but he is not cannon fodder.

Gary Hart is by no means perfect. At times he is shy and stiff, a quality bound to show up in contrast to Reagan. He has so far shown few abilities to excite the have-nots of American society. And he is wrong on some issues (he opposes the UAW's domestic content bill and he would lift the windfall profits tax on future oil discoveries, to stimulate domestic exploration).

What Gary Hart needs, more than anything else, is a populist edge. Under fire,

The Mondale constituency will vote Democratic whoever runs.

Mondale is beginning to portray himself as the people's candidate, the man of compassion. But there is little resonance here. Outside the Washington Beltway, Mondale stirs few juices. To motivate poor, black and blue-collar voters, Hart must follow Mondale's lead, but do better. He must begin talking more about his tax reform and jobs proposals, as well as the fairness issue.

Whatever his failings, Hart clearly stands a better chance against Reagan than Mondale. But even if Hart loses, far better that the Democrats offer voters a whiff of something new to contemplate over the next four years than the rehashed liberalism of the past. If they do, the nation might be ready to trust a Democrat by 1988.

The Democratic Party needs a new ideology, built around a progressive industrial policy and populist politics. Mondale offers neither. Gary Hart, at least, is a step in the right direction. ■ David Osborne writes for *Atlantic Monthly*, *Mother Jones* and other publications.

PERSPECTIVES

*The election is for more guns*By Frank Brodhead
& Edward S. Herman

THE MARCH 25 ELECTION in El Salvador (and the runoff that is likely to follow) are demonstration elections staged by the United States to persuade Americans that the people of El Salvador approve our intervention, while the rebels we oppose have only minority support and are hostile to "democracy." The elections are not primarily about the candidates, but are aimed at mobilizing public and congressional support for an escalation of the U.S. military aid and presence in Central America.

The most important earlier instances of demonstration elections were those in the Dominican Republic in 1966, the presidential election in Vietnam in 1967 and the Salvadoran elections of 1982. In each case the U.S. government had a public relations problem in the growing domestic opposition to military intervention. In each, the problem was greatly eased by an election.

The usefulness of demonstration elections is not at all dependent on even the vestiges of formal democracy being present in the nation hosting the election. In Vietnam, for example, the only mass-based political party, the National Liberation Front, was off the ballot and underground; and the only other large political grouping, the organized Buddhists, had been crushed just prior to the 1967 elec-

tion. The country was ruled by a clique of French-trained mercenaries imposed and preserved in power by American occupation forces. "Neutralism" was a crime. Yet in the Vietnam election the voters turned out in large numbers and the mass media in the U.S. interpreted the election as a triumph of democracy and a repudiation of the opposition.

Similarly, the Salvadoran election of 1982 was held under a state of siege and followed 30 months of pacification and massacre by the security forces and death

appropriate symbols, careful staging and media cooperation in focusing the government's dramatic agenda. The primary symbols are democracy; elections, turnout and terror. Elections are the proxy symbol for democracy; turnout is the measure of public support for our side; and terror is the actions of the rebels as they seek to disrupt this "step toward democracy." The goal of packaging and staging is to get attention focused on the election day spectacle and mobilize the media and official observers to witness

Under the guise of "protecting" the election, Reagan has sent 1,700 U.S. troops to the Honduran border and placed a carrier task force off El Salvador's coast.

squads. Here, as in Vietnam, the rebels could not participate in the election. In both cases the purpose of the election was to prepare the ground for more warfare. The elections were conceived not as a means to negotiations but as an alternative to negotiations. In both cases the media acknowledged that the main interest of the public was in "peace," but the absence of any peace option never caught the media's attention.

The secret of the success of demonstration elections is in the management of ap-

the triumph of "our" side and the repudiation of the rebels via a large turnout.

A potential hazard in staging a demonstration election is that it requires the cooperation of the privately owned media of the U.S. Yet in the history of demonstration elections the media has provided this cooperation with few reservations. This is done through three suppressions. First, the media suppress that the purpose of the election is manipulating the home population by a symbolic event, and that the election is managed not by the client state but by the U.S. The media also suppress the fact that none of the preconditions of a free election—free speech, an independent press, organizational freedom, the ability of candidates to campaign and run and the absence of a system of state terror—are being met. Finally, the media's focus on turnout requires it to suppress the elements of coercion immediately connected with voting, including for El Salvador a legal requirement to vote, the explicit threat by army leaders that non-voting was treasonous and the procedures that make nonvoters identifiable by the security forces. All of these matters were comprehensively suppressed in 1982 by the American media, which presented a large turnout as a vote of confidence for the army.

The role of the media in demonstration elections is more easily understood when elections are held in enemy states. Here the dramatic format and media agenda are turned upside down. In January 1947, for example, an election was held in Poland, sponsored by the Soviet Union. In that case the U.S. press condemned the election beforehand on the ground that the large number of security forces present created an atmosphere incompatible with a free election. These security forces were not accepted as "protecting the election" from rebel disruption. In commenting on Nicaragua's forthcoming elections, Secretary of State George Shultz has criticized the Sandinistas for not allowing emigre counterrevolutionaries to run as candidates. "An election just as an election doesn't really mean anything," Shultz said February 6. "The important thing is that if there is to be an electoral process, it be observed not only at the moment when people vote, but in all the preliminary aspects that make an election really mean something." These comments were confined to Nicaragua's election; neither Shultz nor the mass media have suggested that they had any relevance to elections staged by the U.S. For the latter, the media obligingly shifts its focus from the "preliminary aspects" that "make an election really mean something" to the mechanics of the election,

the election day events themselves, and most notably a large turnout in the face of left "obstruction."

The dramatic structure of a demonstration election depends largely on the success of the election managers in stigmatizing the opposition as rejecting the electoral process. In El Salvador in 1982, the U.S. government and mass media succeeded in casting the election largely in terms of "turnout in the face of the threat of disruption." They were able to do this despite a relative lull in guerrilla attacks during the election period and despite the fact that no one was killed trying to vote. Similarly, both the Dominican Republic and Vietnam elections were structured around the threat that the opposition would disrupt them.

"Rebel disruption" has also emerged as the most important dramatic focus of the current presidential elections in El Salvador. The rebels have attempted to counter its use by getting together beforehand and announcing that they planned not to disrupt the election. The administration is of course ignoring this commitment. It cannot afford to be without "rebel disruption."

The tactical innovation this year has been to use the threat of disruption as the justification for a large U.S. military buildup in Central America. Under the guise of "protecting the election," the Reagan administration has militarized the Honduran border, placing 1,700 U.S. troops there, conducted reconnaissance flights by U.S. pilots based in Honduras over rebel positions, placed a carrier task force off El Salvador's coast and armed U.S. advisors with M-16s. The elections, moreover, have become the occasion for the largest offensive conducted by the Salvadoran army to date, as well as the extension of the Vietnam-style pacification program into the department of Usulután. Finally, under the pretext that the Salvadoran army will have insufficient ammunition to protect voters from the threat of disruption, the Reagan administration has tied its request for enormous supplements in Salvadoran military aid to its professed desire to protect democracy and "free elections."

D'Aubuisson protects democracy?

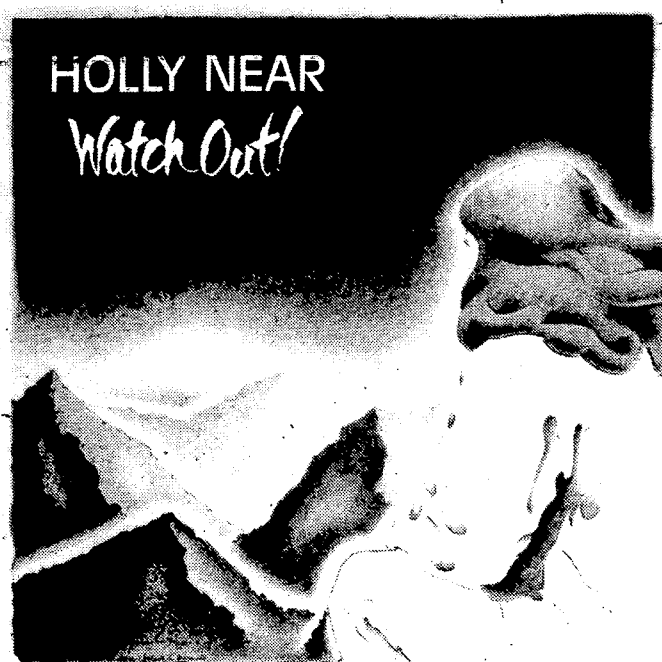
An awkwardness for the administration plan to "protect democracy" has been the spurt of publicity in recent months focusing on the linkage of D'Aubuisson and the death squads to the leaders of the "regular" security forces—the Army, National Guard and Treasury Police. The regulars and irregulars appear to comprise an integrated and mutually supportive network, closely tied to the traditional oligarchy. Thus the longstanding game of pretending that separate and "out-of-control" death squads are the bad guys has broken down. Furthermore, the violence of the irregulars has reached a point causing even the Reagan administration to admonish and threaten the forces of law and order. But as Christopher Dickey observes, "If the web of complicity tying the armed forces to death squad violence ever did unravel, you have to ask yourself, who would be left to fight the war?" That this security force web "protects" a "free election" is ludicrous on its face, although Congress and the mass media have not yet made this point explicitly.

The 1982 election in El Salvador was a great PR success for the administration, allowing it to claim that an incipient democracy was now functioning, and showing by turnout that the rebels were an undemocratic minority. The victory was tarnished by the decline of the Christian Democrats and the rise of the Death Squad right. The 1984 election holds forth less promise of gain and greater potential threat in the growing strength and possible triumph of the extreme right. The military situation is also unfavorable to administration plans. The sharp escalation of U.S. involvement in the interest of "protecting the election," may be a positioning for a direct invasion to prevent further loss of control.

Frank Brodhead and Edward S. Herman have just published *Demonstration Elections: U.S.-Staged Elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam and El Salvador*, by South End Press.

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Jane M. Nick

POLITICS

Ed Koch gets the last word

Mayor, An Autobiography
By Edward I. Koch
Simon and Schuster, 364 pp.,
\$17.95 hardcover

By Rachel B. Gorlin

"...I do the things that the average New Yorker would do if he or she were the Mayor."

—Edward I. Koch, in *Mayor*

New York City Mayor Ed Koch has counted on the city's white, middle-class voters believing that claim for the past seven years. The perception that he has been speaking for the city's forgotten taxpayer—the "silent majority"—has been the main source of his considerable popularity. At a time when Wilson Goode in Philadelphia and Harold Washington in Chicago have tried to heal their cities' divisions along class and racial lines, New York's Koch represents an altogether different strain in municipal leadership: divide and conquer.

Yet, as this bizarre memoir makes clear, Koch's political persona has been shaped more by his personality disorders than by his beliefs or acumen. Consider, for example, the following incident, which is not mentioned in *Mayor* but is similar to many that are.

It's lunchtime on a summer day in 1980 in the middle of the neglected and desolate Third Avenue shopping area of the South Bronx. City officials—including the mayor and the borough president—are holding a ceremony to herald the beginning of yet another drop-in-the-bucket program to "revitalize" the commercial strip. Perhaps 15 or 20 curious pedestrians—most of

them Hispanic—warily watch the speakers from a distance. As Koch begins speaking, several onlookers call out such questions as "Where are our jobs? What's this going to do for us?"

After admonishing the rowdies from the makeshift platform, the mayor strides off into the sparse crowd before anyone can stop him. He heads for the half-dozen malcontents who encircle him and begins berating them for their ingratitude toward the city's efforts on Third Avenue. "Don't you know this program will bring jobs here?" the mayor demands. "Why don't you do something useful with your lives?"

For a few moments Koch and the hecklers bicker back and forth with intense hostility. "You trying to tell us what we need here, man? This is our community!" Then, abruptly, saying something to the effect of "fuck you," Koch pushes his way through the group and heads directly for his car.

So much for the revitalization of the South Bronx. As with so many anecdotes in *Mayor*, everything comes down to Koch getting the last (probably nasty) word.

Evinced by *Mayor's* relentless tales of petty humiliations and petty victories, Koch has made a career exploiting his insatiable need for attention and respect. Since many people enter politics to obtain those things, Koch seemed fairly ordinary at first. But in the early '70s he began to distinguish himself from the pack of New York "liberals" with his eagerness to weaken affirmative action programs, oppose the siting of public housing

in middle-income areas and mouth off about poverty pimps, welfare cheats, feisty unions, ultra-radicals (like the Americans for Democratic Action) and street criminals. He started to champion openly capital punishment, greeting voters at subway stops with a handshake and the line, "Hi, I'm for the death penalty. Are you?"

His eccentric, exhibitionist style was mistaken for political genius as he rose from a safe congressional seat to an upset victory in the 1977 mayoral race. By that time his targets of scorn and ridicule coincided perfectly with the insecurities of New York's white, middle-class voters. And often there has been a germ of truth in his contentions. (Crime is bad; the Third Avenue project would

Ed Koch's (left) leadership style is divide and conquer. (Below) The South Bronx.

create some jobs; the needs of middle-income people have not received as much government attention as they should have.) But Koch's inability to balance the subtleties and ambiguities of urban life and urban government with his need to court attention by pandering has proven tragic for New York's political culture. Koch seems to think that the story of *Mayor* is an upbeat one, a recollection of his successful tenure at the helm of the Big Apple. Instead, what emerges is a cross between adolescent schoolyard boasting and transcripts of sessions on an analyst's couch. The book reveals so much about what goes on in Koch's head, it is frequently embarrassing.

We find out how he demoted several of his deputy mayors, including a woman who cries and a man who pleads to keep the title so that he can save face. (No such luck; the fellow stays in the Koch administration anyway and, according to *Mayor*, "remains a good friend.") We are treated to Koch's pointless blow-by-blow account of the 1980 transit-workers strike negotiations where Koch presses for stiff fines to be levied on workers and derides the "fainthearts" (like the governor and the head of the transit authority) who want to give away the store to the (mostly black) loafers. And we get the inside story of why Harlem community leaders opposed the city's closing of Sydenham Hospital: Communist agitators may have been involved and the black community only cared about the patronage jobs they were getting out of the facility.

The city's black leaders are chastized several times for their condoning (at best) and even abetting (at worst) poverty program rip-offs. This self-interest, along with their apparently inevitable anti-Semitism, has prevented blacks from voting for Koch, according to *Mayor*.

But revealing oneself is not necessarily the same as being honest or accurate. To anyone familiar with New York City politics and government, many of

Koch's anecdotes don't ring true. City Council President Carol Bellamy, known for her cool, professional straightforwardness, is described as breaking down in tears after Koch calls her bluff in some pointless political maneuver.

Tough-guy State Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink, who wanted very badly to make the 1982 gubernatorial race himself, kisses Koch's ass as he urges him to run for governor in one of *Mayor's* least convincing scenes. And Koch is seen heroically beating back demands from the city's big real-estate barons (who also happen to be large Koch campaign contributors) for mammoth tax

Koch's faults are presented as evidence of character.

breaks. Nowhere do we hear about his administration's myriad decisions and policies favoring landlords and developers.

Anything that could possibly diminish either an adversary or a colleague rates a snide mention—from a black congressman's tendency to sweat too much to a borough president's diet obsession. And Koch's faults—such as obstinacy or rudeness—are presented as evidence of character.

The inevitable question arises: why has this man twice been elected mayor of New York City? First, the press has been complicitous in his rise, enjoying his ability to create headline material with his frequent audacious comments. Koch has had an extremely valuable ally in right-wing *New York Post* publisher Rupert Murdoch, whom he is very kind to in *Mayor*.

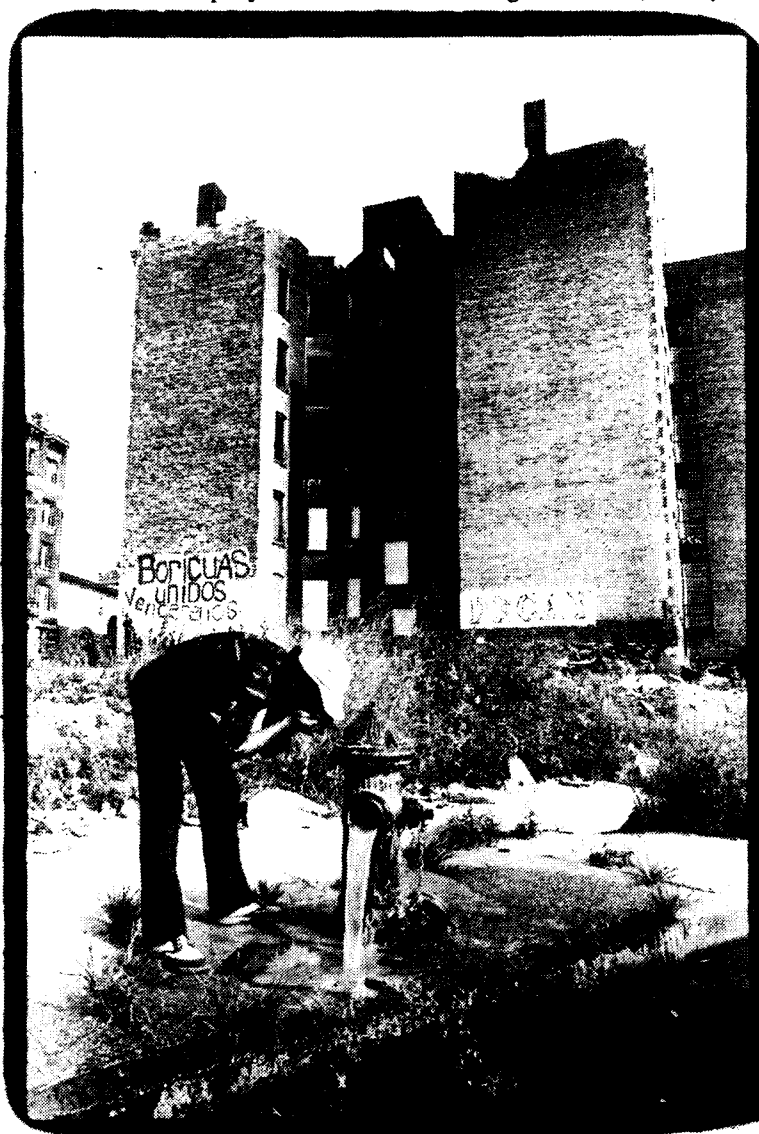
Second, Koch has consistently played into white, middle-class New Yorkers' fears and prejudices with his remarks about crime, left-wingers and the city's minority population. He seems to have decided not to be the mayor of all the city, just the parts that have traditionally turned out to vote. It used to be hard to tell how much Koch really believed the polarizing things he said, but in the face of his comments in *Mayor*, one can safely assume he believes too many of them.

Third, Koch's well-known belief in retaliation for political opposition has helped discourage challengers. And finally, New York has had "worse" mayors in terms of actual municipal administration and governance in the most bureaucratic sense of the job. Hard as the *Village Voice* may try, the Koch administration's scandals have been few and far between.

Ed Koch is not without a sense of humor, though it is frequently mean, and he does embody a certain self-parodying New York Jewish feistiness. While many New Yorkers didn't catch the full implications of it at the time, his 1977 mayoral campaign slogan had to attack both the then-mayor and his predecessor in order to praise himself: "After eight years of charisma and four years of the clubhouse, why not try competence?"

After six years of Koch as mayor and now this autobiography, it's clear that it should have asked, "why not try chutzpah?" No thanks.

Rachel B. Gorlin has covered politics and urban affairs for the *Village Voice* and *City Limits*.



Lance Delevingre

ART & ENTERTAINMENT



SUBURBIA: it's not like Steven Spielberg tells us.

FILM

More fun in the New World

By Pat Aufderheide

Every once in a while, out of the American movie industry's fantasy factory comes something that looks a little more like a nightmare—or even reality, under a light dusting of gritty glitter. This season it's a little exploitation film called *Suburbia*, which is rapidly attracting a cult following.

In *Suburbia*, 1984 has come to roost, in southern California tract housing. Down those once-bucolic streets drive a couple of white punks, their junker car spray-painted with an anarchist "A." They're pissed off, but they're not sure at what. "I hate buses," says one, pitching a beer can at one. As they cruise past boarded up houses, one quotes from his mother's 1968 diary. She extolls their new suburban home, dad's safe job at Lockheed and the neighborhood as "a good place to raise kids."

But in 1984, the suburbs seem the slums of the future. The houses that haven't been abandoned are inhabited by sullen, roaming souls. Mom's an alcoholic, dad's a homosexual, Buddy's a punk and a runaway, but he's sis' only hero. Wild dogs roam the streets at night, attacking small children.

The only people with any answers seem to be the punks, who band together against the lies of the past in the unlikely haven of dissonant punk bars. Some take over an abandoned house and call themselves TR, for "the rejected." Their sheets may be filthy, their eating habits barbaric, their days TV-obsessed and their nights electronically amplified. But they love each other, and that's what counts.

Still, they're misunderstood. The laid-off workers in the community regard them as they do the wild dogs, and a vigilante-like community group wants the local

police to shut down their group house—especially after the TR kids try to attend the stuffy family funeral for one of their own, a girl who overdosed.

What we have here, as Cool Hand Luke used to say, is a failure of communication. Only one person really wants to bridge it: the local police officer, stepfather to TR's leader. A black, he's the only one around who doesn't seem to have been destroyed by the promise of the American dream. And even he can't keep bad trouble from erupting at the end.

The plot makes room for plenty of "action"—as violence is known in exploitation films. A Doberman dog tears a baby apart; punks strip a young girl naked at a dance; laid-off workers joyride with shotguns. But the movie also portrays the collapse of the American dream with compassion.

The kids are all right.

If the laid-off workers are vigilantes, they are also people who resent having been jettisoned from the ranks of useful citizens. They feel understandably put

down by kids driving wrecks, busting up rummage sales and raiding their garages. The kids act out their anger at being excluded from an affluence they had been taught was part of the landscape, using the most familiar resources they know. The only group the film spares no sympathy for are parents who take out their frustration on their kids. The kids are all right, even though they're not always right.

If this seems to be a movie with a message, that much maligned creature, it shouldn't be surprising. Exploitation films typically truck in personal anger and social crisis, even though most of them take a right-wing approach. Director and scriptwriter Penelope Spheeris made *Suburbia* be-

cause she's concerned about the signals the punk movement is sending the rest of us.

"The youth movement is a barometer for social, economic and political conditions," she says. The film was intended as a response to the California daydream that films like *E.T.* present. "Steven Spielberg is in a dream world himself," she says. "I grew up in tract housing, and I know it's gruesome out there. His vision sells because people want to escape. But what I see is that people are angry and frustrated now. Their lives aren't working out the way they hoped. And they're taking it out on their kids."

Suburbia may savage the suburbs, but it's sympathetic to the

people in it. That may be because Spheeris knows them. She met L.A. punks by making the acclaimed insiders' documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization*. And she invited punks she knew to star in this film, in which the only actors are the adults.

The incidents and even the "bits" are drawn from personal experience and news stories. TR, for instance, is modeled on an L.A. house called The Connected. And then there is the rat. Yes. One character carries a pet rat everywhere, and at one point puts it into his mouth. This may be gross, and it may be an overly obvious metaphor for the kid's craving for affection and acceptance. But made up it isn't. Spheeris and co-producer Bert Dragin (an Ohio businessman who financed the low-budget film) met a punk girl with a pet rat at a dance. They rented the rat for a rock-bottom \$50, and one of the punks in the film adopted it with enthusiasm. "Putting it in his mouth was his idea—we would never have told him to," says Spheeris.

Punks who worked on the film are happy with the results. "Everyone involved was worried it would be sensationalist," says Grant Miner, who plays a drug addict. Miner, a punk and rock musician, now studies journalism at Occidental College. "But its attitude is quite realistic."

"I've always felt the California punk movement was misunderstood. In England it was led by people who couldn't get 'the dream.' But here it's the opposite. People have realized the dream. You can't go any further,

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CHICAGO, IL

March 30

A benefit to raise money for a threatened Salvadoran family. Classical pianist Frank Abinnanti will play his original composition "Sandinista." Includes other music by Miguel Murro and Walter Urroz as well as poetry by Renny Golden and others. 8:00

p.m., McCormick Lounge, Mundelein College, 6364 N. Sheridan. Donation: \$6.00 at door, \$5.00 in advance, \$3.00 for students, seniors, Central Americans. Reservations: 663-4398. Sponsored by the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America.

April 5

PSR/Chicago's April chapter meeting: a special showing of *Weapons in Space*, a national teleconference organized by the Union of Concerned Scientists. 6:30-9:00 p.m., Flanner Auditorium, Loyola University Lakeshore Campus. Panelists include: Dr. Carl Sagan, Dr. Richard Garwin, Admiral Noel Gayler and Dr. Henry Kendall. Call 663-1777 for more information.

April 8

Chicago DSA meeting will feature *The Last Pullman Car*, a film about the closing of Chicago's Pullman plant given three stars by the *Reader* and *Chicago Tribune*. "A powerful and revelatory film" (Studs Terkel). At St. Nicolai's Church, 3000 N. Kedzie, 7:00 p.m. \$3 donation requested. Childcare. Refreshments will follow.

WASHINGTON, DC

March 30

Dorothy Healey, longtime radical activist, makes her Washington debut

in a debate with Michael Parenti, author of *Democracy for the Few*, on "The U.S. Left and the Soviet Union." March 30 at 8:00 p.m. Machinists Hall, 1300 Connecticut N.W. \$3 donation (\$1 fixed income, unemployed). Sponsored by D.C./Maryland DSA.

LEXINGTON, KY

April 20, 21 & 22

American Atheists, Founder, Dr. Madalyn Murray O'Hair, Director, Mr. Jon Murray, will hold their 14th annual convention in Lexington, Ky., Radisson Plaza Hotel, April 20, 21 & 22. Speakers: Dr. O'Hair, Dr. Alfred Lilienthal (editor, *Middle East Perspective*), Barbara Smoker (president, National Secular Society, England). Non-members welcome. Information: Dan Flores (512) 458-1244.

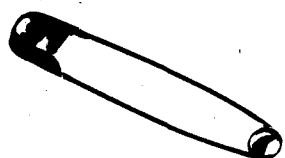
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In 1984, the suburbs seem the slums of the future.



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not without hitting the ocean. This is it—and it's not enough."

In audiences, kids seem to sense the accuracy behind the action. In Washington, D.C., where the film premiered, one punk, his outfit held together with safety pins and his hair carefully spiked, said, "I thought some of the acting was crude, but the sense was right. I live in a housing development, and it is the slum of the future. The film showed that being a punk is an attitude—generally being against conformity. It's in the music, like the Sex Pistols' 'Anarchy'—'I don't know what I want but I know how to get it.'"

Some people deeply dislike the film, though—parents, for instance. "One said to me, 'I walked out of that film and I wanted to hit a wall,'" recalls Dragin. "What interests me is that they don't know why it makes them angry. I think it's because they feel guilty about how they're treating their own kids."

Some young people also criticize the film. In Santa Cruz, Calif., a bastion of feminist and leftist politics, the film elicited a wide range of objections. "They called it violent, homophobic and misogynist," says Dragin. "And they kept saying it was not 'P.C.' 'P.C.," as the filmmakers learned, stands for "politically correct."

Punks would probably be proud of that objection, in their restless search to challenge all existing expectations. Spheeris says

that the punk subculture has already changed since the film was made. "Each new generation is trying to create an identity. And in this society, each one has to be brand new and totally original."

But the subcultural originality that *Suburbia* draws its energy from is remarkable in its familiarity. For all their safety pins, loud music and odd haircuts, for all their pre-emptive rejections of authority, *Suburbia's* punks basically want "a good home." If the suburbs and their families don't provide it, they'll carve out a little haven in a heartless world on their own terms.

It's the oldest theme in America's youth films, newly styled for each generation. In *Rebel without a Cause*, the problem wasn't really the kids, but the parents; family responsibility could restore social order. The same dream that fueled the building and selling of tract housing fuels the movies made about the decay of that dream.

Usually, though, the movies redefine the problem to make room for a happy ending. Consider another recent release, *Footloose*. In *Footloose*, the smash hit by Robert Ross, a new wave, plugged-in kid from the big city moves to a small town that is in the grip of conservative religion. Just the sight of Ren's haircut makes every local's hair stand on end. But by organizing a school dance despite the minister's objections, Ren restores social peace, bridging the generation

gap, saving the minister's daughter from "going bad" and freeing the town from the pall of old-time prudery. The reason that Ren can become the best of citizens is simple: nothing is really wrong. The kids aren't really rebellious, just exuberant; their music doesn't reject authority, it's just a modern expression of joy; their parents don't really have problems of their own, they were just confused.

Footloose may sell soundtracks like hotcakes, and it may reassure us that somewhere in the heartland the problems in the American family have just been one big misunderstanding. But *Footloose* merely exploits the social tension it refers to. Ironically, it's the exploitation film, *Suburbia*, that explores the culture in crisis and subcultural responses. And in the process, it suggests that maybe, just maybe, we can't go home again. ■

Cotton

Continued from page 16

and finally the men—along the dusty road to a small shaded graveyard beside a cattle farm.

This was not the first child the baby's mother, already pregnant again, had lost. She lagged behind the others, seeming indifferent. But after the brother finished his sermon, and the first shovel of dirt was thrown over

the coffin, she, along with her mother, collapsed into tears, her face torn with sorrow, as she was led past us.

The women meet.

The baby's death, the brother's presence and the rapport between two Hispanic women from New York and the women in the camp sparked the first women's meeting ever held in Aposcoli.

AMLAE, the nationwide women's organization, had not made it out into this part of the country, so most revolutionary reforms concerning women had been pushed by a male leadership, with disastrous results. School and day care were seen as infringements on a mother's turf; the literacy campaign became one more chore; and the first polio vaccination campaign had to be carried out literally at gun point.

The result was mutual distrust but when the women heard that a North American named Joey and a nun named Yvonne were going to give a talk about women's health care, they poured out of their homes and packed the small union hall.

Gradually, the women's concerns came out. They wanted literature from AMLAE on health care, but they wanted it with pictures. They wanted AMLAE to come out and speak. They liked the idea of women teaching women. They wanted the roads paved so there would be less dust.

But most of all, they wanted a priest to visit their village to bless the dead, baptize their children and hold communion. No one could write a petition, so they spoke to the Archbishop of Managua on tape.

"They were angry," said Joey. "They said the church served the rich and not the poor." She asked for volunteers to follow up the demands. "You need leaders," she told them. "Someone to take responsibility."

There was dead silence in the room. Then, "one woman raised her hand. Then another, then another." At the end, "they applauded us, we applauded them. They started crying, we started crying. Yvonne said she wasn't going to leave them."

And Yvonne stayed, one of the eight people left behind as the trucks pulled out at 5:00 a.m. the next day. I went on to another camp, and 50 other recruits came from Managua for a 10-day stint. A new teacher—a dynamic militant from AMLAE—came to the village. And the archbishop of Managua has agreed to send a priest to Aposcoli soon.

Two days after I returned to the States I read about a helicopter attack at Potosi, a rocketing at Punta San Jose and the aircraft and speedboat sinking of three patrol boats in the Gulf of Fonseca, all within 20 miles of Aposcoli. ■

Bob Sanders writes for *The Guardian* and other publications.

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IN THESE TIMES Classified Advertising, 1300 W. Belmont Ave. Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 472-5700.

WE WERE 152 *BRIGADISTAS*, FROM all over the U.S., crammed onto three trucks, bound in by rickety wooden barriers precariously tied together with frayed rope. Below us was a narrow, winding road on which no bus dared to tread.

Behind us was Chinandega and Managua, where I had landed only yesterday from the Miami airport. Ahead lay Apascoli, a small coastal village across the bay from El Salvador, relatively close to Honduras. It was cotton country, flat and free from *contra* ground activity, though the area had recently been hit by air and sea. We were headed there to volunteer for the harvest.

Shortly after dusk, the sky lit up with flashes. We dismissed it as lightning or shooting stars. None of us knew we were witnessing the biggest aerial attack since the dawn of the revolution.

Six planes destroyed a civilian communication center in Manzanilla, 20 miles from Apascoli. Three people, including a 16-year-old boy, were killed in similar attacks. Eleven more were wounded.

Too large and sophisticated to be conducted only by *contras*, many believed the raids were the work of the Honduran air force with the help of U.S. military personnel. The U.S. State Department claimed that Salvadoran pilots carried out the attack. No one knows for sure.

Welcome to Nicaragua.

Bombing is nothing new to Apascoli's 270 residents. The state farm itself has never been bombed, but many who work there are refugees from nearby towns. The four-farm production unit was formerly owned in partnership by a North American, a Salvadoran and Alfonso Robelo. Robelo, who left the revolutionary government and the country last year to join the *contras* in Costa Rica, was not well-liked by the workers, who complained of poor food and not getting paid on time. The state "bought" the unit against the owner's \$2.5 million debt.

"They left the farm an empty shell, hollow," said the regional secretary general of the farmworkers union. "Only 15 or 20 tractors in bad condition. We basically started from scratch."

Because credit is hard to come by, parts are hard to get. Mechanical cannibalism passes for repairs. Said one farmworker, pointing to his John Deere tractor: "We had to take apart five to get this one running. The Russian ones aren't as good, but at least we can get the parts."

Living conditions in Apascoli are primitive. Most families were housed in rows of small, dingy dilapidated rooms located in long, narrow, one-story barracks. Others simply lived under thatched roofs with dirt floors.

There are only four or five faucets for running water, thanks to a pump that works sporadically. So most water is stored in old, rusty pesticide containers. We doubled our dose of water purification tablets, but half of us got sick and even the residents are not immune.

We were fed rice, beans, tortillas and little else, but there was always enough. People occasionally bought oranges or bread from the village store. Residents were able to grow their own food in the off season. Formerly they were kicked off the land when the harvest was over to work somewhere else.

Reform's problems.

Reforms have contributed to the country's acute labor shortage. Much of the confiscated land has been distributed to worker cooperatives or individual peasants. In addition, the government's easy credit policy has allowed many poor farmers to keep their land. Thus the rural landless migrant workforce is disappearing.

But the main reason for the labor shortage is the war. Border conflicts have cut off migrant laborers from El Salvador and Honduras, which formerly supplied 80 percent of Apascoli's labor force. They have also attracted the country's most dedicated, able-bodied youth into the militia. Now many in the militia pick coffee in the dangerous, *contra*-infested hills, with guns over their shoulders.

There were at most 100 agricultural

By Bob Sanders

Cotton picking



Americans help with the harvest in war-torn Nicaragua

workers in Apascoli, but as many as 750 were needed. In the whole region, they were 2,000 short of the 20,000 goal.

So *brigadistas* were called in to help fill the gap in a province that produces 54 percent of Nicaragua's GNP. High school students are required to help with the harvest in order to be eligible for free higher education. Volunteers come from nearby towns to work on "Red and Black Sundays." And then there were "internationalists" such as ourselves, who, because of lack of experience, tend to add more to the morale than to the economy.

We were organized into squads of 10, platoons of 40 or 50, all adding up to the Maura Clarke Brigade, so named after the Brooklyn-born churchwoman, one of the four raped and murdered by the Salvadoran military in December 1980.

Each morning at 5:00 a.m. we'd rise from our wooden bunks, trying to beat the sun to the fields. We'd stuff 20 to 40 pounds of fluff into canvas bags hooked onto our belts until around 11:00 a.m. when the sun chased us back, despite our feeble attempts to block it with sun screen, straw hats, long sleeved shirts and bandanas.

After a siesta—lying in shaded hammocks, conversing with Nicaraguans in our stumbling Spanish—we headed out again at 3:00 p.m. and worked until dusk. Then some braved the long lines for a shower, but most just put up with the dust. Cultural exchange and folk singing continued past the 9:30 p.m. curfew.

One afternoon our routine was broken by a fire. Fires are common in the summer. Some are intentionally set to clear the land for next year's crop. Some are accidents caused by people who live out in the hills. But many suspected that this one, due to its sheer size—raging over seven acres and threatening much of the cotton crop—was set by the *contras*.

There was no time for speculation. Twenty of us hopped into a pick-up. "Where do we get the water?" I asked. The Nicaraguans looked at me as if I was crazy. You don't put out fires here; you merely contain them.

When we got near the flames, we broke off leafy branches from trees by the side of the road. With the stick end we dug a barrier between the fire and the cotton; with the leafy portion we beat down the flames.

Eventually, the fire was directed into a harmless gully. We were about to head back to town when a flatbed truck stopped us on the road. It was the rest of our brigade. "The fire is five minutes from Apascoli," we were told.

This time, equipped with machetes and shovels, we attempted to encircle the 10-foot flames and head them off before they reached the town. It looked like a hopeless task, until we were joined by hundreds of high school *brigadistas* from the nearby state farm at Puntanata. Side by side we completed the task by dusk, and as the flames died down we stood across from each other on the smoldering earth.

Then the chants began:

"Vive Dr. Martin Luther King!" they shouted.

"Sandino vive!" we answered back.

"Vive la soledad de los pueblos Norte Americano y los pueblos Nicaraguense!"

"Vive!"

We challenged them to a game of baseball. (Nicaraguans are crazy about the game. Some knew the entire starting lineup of the Baltimore Orioles.) But when we rolled into Apascoli, we found a wake. Lying on a small table surrounded by candles was a dead baby. Nine months old, she had succumbed to contaminated water and inadequate food when she was weaned. Tomorrow, we would have to choose between a baseball game and a funeral. Most of us chose the latter.

Apascoli had not seen a priest in 14 years. It was too far out of the way for one to journey there, and the villagers did not have the money to pay his way. None of the dead killed by Somoza had ever been blessed.

But there was a Jesuit brother among our ranks. We followed the Nicaraguans—children first with the tiny coffin and a makeshift wooden cross, then the women

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